NATION

Manipur intensifies combing ops after 2 killed by militants

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Sensex rises 194 pts to close at record high on rate cut hopes

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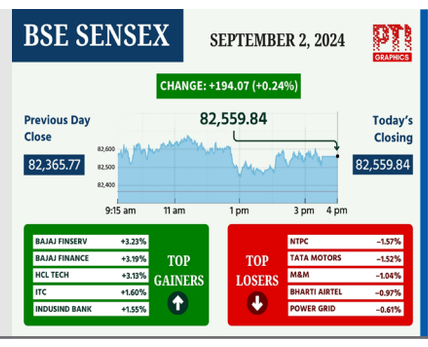

SPORTS

ISL is a key event in my life: Chhetri

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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India gets its 2nd Para Gold as Nitesh wins badminton

PARIS, 2 SEPT

Kumar Nitesh secured his first Paralympic gold in men's singles SL3, while Thulasimathi Murugesan and Manisha Ramadass clinched silver and bronze in women's singles SU5, respectively, marking a historic performance by Indian shuttlers here on Monday.

Nitesh, 29, who lost his left leg in a train accident in 2009, showed remarkable resilience and tactical brilliance in his 21-14, 18-21, 23-21 victory over Great Britain's Daniel Bethell in a gripping final, delivering India's first gold of the event.

"I still don't feel it," Nitesh, a fan of Virat Kohli, said after the 80-minute match. "Maybe, when I go to the podium and the national anthem is played, it will sink in."

In the women's singles SU5 category, 22-year-old Thulasimathi, born with a congenital deformity in her left hand, fought hard but lost 17-21, 10-21 to China's defending champion Yang Qiuxia, taking home the silver. "I am happy with the silver but a bit disappointed that I couldn't give my best," she said.

"I made a lot of mistakes. I should have taken the first set. I lost 1-2 points due to drift and then a few unforced errors, which gave her the lead."

Meanwhile, 19-year-old Manisha, who was born with Erb's Palsy affecting her right arm, secured the bronze by defeating Denmark's Cathrine Rosengren 21-12, 21-8. "I was disappointed yesterday. I couldn't get over it. Since I woke up today, I was still thinking about the match. I was angry for making some errors yesterday, so I poured all that anger on the court today. But this is not enough for me; I will work hard for the next four years to change the colour of the medal,"he said. —*PTI*

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India's Nitesh Kumar with the Gold Medal, in Paris, on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

How can houses be razed without following law: SC

SC will lay down rules that would be enforceable across India

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

With several state administrations flattening the houses of those involved in criminal cases with bulldozers, Supreme Court on Monday questioned how can anybody's house be demolished just because he is an accused.

The court said it will lay down the guidelines on the issue that would be enforceable across the country.

The court, however, said it will not protect any unauthorised construction or encroachment on public roads.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, referred to an earlier affidavit filed by the state. He said the affidavit states that merely because a person was alleged to have been a part of some offence can never be a ground for demolition of his immovable property.

PHOTO: PTI

Mehta said the state has said that demolition of an immovable property can take place "only for violation of and in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the respective applicable municipal law or law governing development authorities of the area".

He said no immovable property can be demolished solely on the ground that the owner or occupant of such property was involved in a criminal offence. Mehta added that in the cases cited in the petition against the Uttar Pradesh government, individuals were served notices for violating building codes, but they failed to respond. Consequently, the unauthorised structures were demolished in accordance with established municipal procedures. "A father may have a recalcitrant son, but if the house is demolished on this ground…this is not the way to go about it," the bench said. It asked the counsel for the parties to give their suggestions so that the court can frame appropriate guidelines which will be applicable on a pan-India basis.

The top court was hearing the petitions filed by 'Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind' seeking directions to various state governments to ensure no further demolition of properties of those accused in cases of rioting. —*PTI*

'WRONG KANNADA'

KPSC exam to be held again due to error in translation

Kannada activists protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday demanding jobs for Kannadigas and re-examination of the KPSC exam ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that he has directed Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) to re-conduct the Gazetted Probationers' examination, following the reports that there were inappropriate Kannada translations of questions.

In a post on X, Siddaramaiah said, "In the light of reports of inappropriate Kannada translation of questions in the KPSC Gazetted Probationers' examination, I have directed KPSC to reconduct of the examination within 2 months to ensure fairness to all candidates."

"Those responsible for these lapses have been relieved of their duties. " he added.

Earlier BJP MLC N Ravi Kumar said, "Several omissions and errors were found in the preliminary examination question paper for 384 gazetted probationer posts of KPSC which was held on Tuesday, making the whole system a laughing stock. It has been proved once again that nothing goes right under the misrule of this nalayak INC Karnataka government."

The Gazetted Probationers' examination was conducted on 27 August for filling 350 gazetted probationary officer posts in the State.

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike President, TA Narayan Gowda said that in 400 marks question paper, over 60 questions were wrong. —*ANI*

Jawan dies after bullet injury, Army says no terror angle

JAMMU, 2 SEPT

An army personnel suffered a fatal bullet injury at a military station here on Monday and died, a defence spokesman said, ruling out any terror angle after the firing sparked an alert and a massive house-to-house search in the area. Naik Kuldeep Singh of Punjab was on guard duty when he was hit by a bullet in the head at Sunjawan Military Station on the outskirts of Jammu and was evacuated to a hospital where he succumbed to injuries. Police along with other teams rushed to the scene to join the army in a massive search operation as a terror attack was suspected. —*PTI*

BBMP starts online building plan approval scheme

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday announced the launch of the revolutionary online building plan approval process for construction of buildings in sites up to 4000 square feet in City civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike imits. Addressing a press conference at Vidhana Soudha, he said, "The 'Nambike Nakshe' scheme allows owners to get provisional building plan with an approval by an authorised architect or engineer and then upload the same online for a final approval by the BBMP.—*Salar News*

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Shooting outside AP Dhillon's Canada house

VANCOUVER, 2 SEPT

Shots were reportedly fired outside the residence of Punjabi singer AP Dhillon on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada on Sunday. Rohit Godara, a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, allegedly claimed responsibility for the incident. A video, which could not be verified, shows a man standing outside a house, firing multiple shots at night. The video is being widely circulated online, although the exact location remains unconfirmed. A purported post circulating online shows Rohit Godara claiming that the shootings took place at two locations in Canada—Vancouver Island and Woodbridge, Toronto. According to the post, the shots were fired outside the singer's house after he featured Salman Khan in a music video. —*Agencies*

Rescue officials save a girl in a flood-affected area, in Bhadradri Kothagudem district, Telangana, on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

31 dead, trains cancelled in Andhra, T'gana rain fury

HYDERABAD/ VIJAYAWADA, 2 SEPT

Torrential downpour in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh left 31 people dead, battered roads and rail tracks snapping connectivity, submerged thousands of acres of agricultural crops and left people scampering for daily needs as rescue agencies were pressed into rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

Both the states were reeling under the impact of the rains on Monday, as 16 people were killed in Telangana and 15 others in the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, which particularly bore the brunt of the rain fury. A portion of gravel under the railway track near Kesamudram in Telangana was washed away due to floodwaters. Nearly 4.5 lakh people were affected in Andhra, even as heart-wrenching scenes of people struggling to ensure essentials, including milk were witnessed in the worst affected Vijayawada. The most affected districts included NTR, Guntur, Krishna, Eluru, Palnadu, Bapatla and Prakasam, said an official press release. Twenty SDRF and 19 NDRF teams are engaged in relief and rescue operations. Due to rains in the two states, flooding and breaches were reported in Kazipet-Vijayawada section. —*PTI*

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ED arrests AAP MLA Amanatullah in Waqf scam

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday arrested Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Amanatullah Khan as part of a money laundering investigation against him and some others linked to him, official sources said.

He was taken into custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after the agency conducted a search at his residence in Okhla area of the national capital that was launched just after 6 am.

They said some questions were put to Khan during the searches but he remained "evasive" and hence was arrested.

He was then taken away from his home to the ED office in an official vehicle. The MLA was produced before a court on Monday where he was sent to 15 days Judicial custody to put him under sustained interrogation.

Reacting to the arrest, the AAP said the more the BJP tries to suppress us, the more vocal we will be.

A security team of the CRPF and Delhi Police was present inside and outside Khan's house during the action.

The money laundering case against the 50-year-old legislator stems from two FIRs, one by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Wakf Board related alleged irregularities and another by the Delhi Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) related to a case of alleged possession of disproportionate assets. —*PTI*

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Amanatullah Khan ***PHOTO: X***

SC gives bail to Bibhav

Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar in the Swati Maliwal assault case noting that he has been in custody for over 100 days. It restrained him from resuming his position as CM's personal secretary.

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Manipur conflict worsens with 1st-ever drone attack

IMPHAL, 2 SEPT

A 23-year-old woman was injured in another drone bomb attack in Manipur's Senjam Chirang on Monday. The ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur for the first time ever reported use of weaponised drones, marking a severe escalation in the conflict between Meitei community and the Kuki tribes. On Sunday, the Manipur Police confirmed that suspected Kuki insurgents employed drones to drop bombs, a shift from their previous use of drones solely for reconnaissance. Manipur BJP MLA Rajkumar Imo Singh requested the Centre to withdraw central forces from the state if their presence failed to halt the violence. —*Agencies*

>>>More on Page 4

TMC boycotts 3 news channels over propoganda

KOLKATA, 2 SEPT

TMC has announced a boycott of three television news channels, accusing them of pursuing an "anti-Bengal agenda-driven propaganda" against the West Bengal government. The channels in question are ABP Ananda, Republic TV, and TV9.

In a statement released by the party, the TMC expressed its disapproval of the channels' coverage, claiming they were engaged in a campaign to discredit the state government.

The decision to boycott comes in the wake of a heated debate on television between BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul and TMC MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar. During the exchange, Dastidar made controversial remarks about Paul, referring to her as a 'saree-maker' and criticizing past CPM-era practices involving medical students. The comments were met with significant backlash, leading Dastidar to issue a public apology on social media

The backdrop to this controversy is the recent outrage over the brutal rape and murder of a junior doctor at RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata.

The incident has sparked widespread protests from doctors and students, and intensified calls for the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from BJP. —*Agencies*

15 DAYS OF QUESTIONING

CBI arrests RG Kar's ex-principal Sandip for 'financial irregularities'

KOLKATA, 2 SEPT

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday arrested the former principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital Dr Sandip Ghosh in connection with the alleged financial misconduct at the establishment, officials said.

Ghosh was questioned for the 15th day at the agency's Salt Lake office over the alleged rape and murder of the RG Kar hospital post-graduate trainee on 9 August.

On 23 August, the Calcutta High Court ordered the transfer of the probe into the alleged financial irregularities at RG Kar hospital from a State-constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) to the CBI.

PHOTO: PTI

The direction came in response to a petition by former deputy superintendent of the facility, Dr Akhtar Ali, who prayed for a probe by ED into multiple counts of alleged financial misconduct at the state-run institute during the tenure of its former principal.

Ghosh served as principal of RG Kar Medical College from February 2021 to September 2023. He was transferred from RG Kar in October that year but inexplicably returned to that position within a month. He held his position at the hospital till the day the hospital doctor was found murdered.

In his plea before the High Court, Ali accused Ghosh of illegal sale of unclaimed corpses, trafficking of biomedical waste and passing tenders against commission paid by medicine and medical equipment suppliers. —*PTI*

'IC-814' ROW: GOVT SUMMONS NETFLIX CONTENT HEAD

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

The government has summoned the content head of OTT platform Netflix over the series 'IC-814: The Kandahar Hijack', which has triggered a row over the depiction of hijackers, contending that nobody has the right to play with the sentiments of the nation.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is seeking an explanation on the allegedly contentious aspects of the OTT series portraying the 1999 hijack of an Indian Airlines flight by Pakistan-based terror outfit Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. The depiction of hijackers of the Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu to Delhi stirred a row with a viewers objecting to the 'humane' projection of the perpetrators. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Trains cancelled due to waterlogging

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Due to heavy rain and waterlogging over tracks at many locations under South Western Railway's (SWR) jurisdiction, the East Central Railway cancelled several trains on Monday. A statement issued by Sharswati Chandra, Chief Public Relation Officer (CPRO) of East Central Railway on Monday said, "Due to heavy rain and water logging over tracks at several locations in the SWR, the ECR cancelled Sangha Mitra Express (from Danapur to Bengaluru-12296) and Danapur-Bengaluru special train (06510) which was scheduled to depart from Danapur on 4 September." "Two more trains have also been cancelled due track breach following heavy rains at Rayanapadu railway station in SWR. These trains include: Bengaluru-Danapur (12295), Bengaluru-Danapur special (06509)," said the CPRO. *—PTI*

ED arrests 4 in cyber investment 'scam'

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested four persons in Bengaluru under the anti-money laundering law PMLA for allegedly duping people in the name of investing in stock markets using some fraudulent mobile phone apps. Shashi Kumar M, 25, Sachin M, 26, and Kiran S K, 25, were arrested on 15 August while Charan Raj C, 26, was taken into custody on 21 August, the agency said in a statement on Monday. All four were involved in the incorporation of companies and opening of bank accounts through which proceeds of crime generated from the alleged cyber scam were laundered, it said. *—PTI*

2 spread fake news against Gandhis, 1 booked

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

An FIR has been registered by the Bengaluru Police against a Bangladeshi journalist and a woman staffer of an Indian news portal for allegedly spreading fake news and misinformation about Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi, both senior Congress leaders. The case was registered at the High Grounds police station against the journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhaury and Aditi - working with the news portal, for sharing his claims on its social media handle, they said. According to the complainant Srinivas G, associated with the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), the Bangladeshi journalist allegedly shared a post on his X handle linking Sonia Gandhi to a foreign spy agency. He alleged Choudhary did so with an intention to malign the public image of the Gandhi family and that the journalist had shared such a post to create enmity between two religions. *—PTI*

BBMP limits get automated building plan approval

The plan applies for constructions in sites up to 4,000sq ft

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday announced the launch of the revolutionary online building plan approval process for construction of buildings in sites up to 4000 square feet in city civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits.

Addressing a press conference at Vidhana Soudha, he said, "The 'Nambike Nakshe' scheme allows owners to get provisional building plan with an approval by an authorised architect or engineer and then upload the same online for a final approval by the BBMP. This will be applicable for constructions on all sites up to 50x80 feet area.

Shivakumar said the BBMP engineers will inspect the construction site at a later stage. This would ensure that people don't have to run from pillar to post for sanction plan.

The scheme was launched on a pilot basis in two zones of BBMP and now it has been rolled out in the entire BBMP limits, he added.

He further said the lands have been identified around Hebbal, Nagavara, Bellandur, Bengaluru South. Nearly 100 km of roads would be taken up in first phase. The roads are not open for buses but will be open up for other vehicles. Funds of Rs 200 crore has been allocated for this. He also announced that the 1st Stage of the Yettinahole project would be inaugurated on 6 September and that project would be completed by 2027. Asked about protests by BBMP contractors which started today demanding the release of payments, he said, "I understand the pain of contractors. We have reduced the outstanding from 75 per cent to 50 per cent. Some bills are pending with the Commission. We will help them within the legal boundaries once the Commission gives its recommendations. The contractors should not blackmail the government. If one contractor protests, another one will take up work." *—PTI*

BBMP contractors protest in front of BBMP Head Office for the release of remaining payment on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

PANEL FORMED

Nursing colleges under govt lens for high fees

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil on Monday set up a fee regulatory committee to monitor and regulate the fee structures in nursing colleges across the State amid the issue of exorbitant fees was reported at the nursing colleges.

Speaking at the review meeting held in Vidhana Soudha Patil revealed that his office had been inundated with complaints from students and parents regarding the excessive fees charged by nursing college. He said, "In response, we have formed a five-member fee regulatory committee, headed by the Joint Secretary of the Medical Education Department which will scrutinize the fee structures of these colleges to ensure compliance with government-prescribed limits."

The Minister issued strict instructions to department officials to withdraw the Essential Certificate & Feasibility Certificate (EC&FC) of any nursing college found imposing fees beyond the prescribed limits.

Currently, the fee structure for nursing courses stands at Rs 10,000 for students admitted under the government quota, Rs 1 lakh under the management quota, and Rs 1.40 lakh for non-Karnataka students. Despite recent requests from nursing college managements to increase the fee structure by 20 percent the minister has rejected the proposals.

For B.Sc. Nursing colleges, the minister instructed the Director of Medical Education, Dr BL Sujatha Rathod, to form a panel for inspection and submit a prompt report.

—Salar News

Guv seeks govt's reply on land allotment scam

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has sought an explanation from the Congress government on a petition submitted to him by the BJP seeking the dismissal from the Cabinet of Minister Priyank Kharge over the alleged allotment of land to a trust run by his family including his father and Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge.

Priyank Kharge confirmed on Monday that the Governor has written to the Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh seeking explanation, as he hit out at Gehlot accusing him of acting with a "lightning speed" on complaints against Congress leaders, but with a "tortoise speed" on ones against BJP and JD(S) leaders.

Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Legislative Council Chalavadi T Narayanaswamy on 27 August petitioned the Governor seeking the dismissal of Priyank Kharge from Cabinet over the alleged allotment.

Alleging "nepotism", he said that it is a case of criminal breach of trust from the Kharges towards the fellow Schedule Caste entrepreneurs.

"Siddhartha Vihar Trust is being reportedly allotted five acres of land under the SC Quota by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) in the Hi¬tech Defence Aerospace Park near Bengaluru out of the 45.94 acres meant for civic amenities (CA) in March 2024," Narayanaswamy has said.

He further pointed out, questioning how did the Kharges become aerospace entrepreneurs? "How did the department give a nod for this allotment? Was the minister (Industries) compelled to allot the land by the Chief Minister?" *—PTI*

Priyank Kharge PHOTO: PTI

'Trust given 19 acres of land free of cost'

BJP MP Lahar Singh Siroya on Monday alleged that 19 acres of government land have been given free of cost to an institute run by the Siddhartha Vihara Trust belonging to the Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge's family and demanded that it be probed by an independent agency. He claimed that new documents reveal that the land parcel was given to the International Institute of Pali, Sanskrit and Comparative Philosophy, Kalaburagi, run by the Trust. *—PTI*

CM to hold first meet of Chamundeshwari authority today

MYSURU, 2 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday will hold the first meeting of Shree Chamundeshwari Kshetra Development Authority after having darshan at Sri Chamundeshwari Temple. Karnataka High Court (HC) had vacated the stay order brought by Mysuru royal family member Pramoda Devi Wadiyar against the constitution of the authority by State government.

State government had constituted the authority following public demand, KPCC Spokesperson M Lakshmana said on Monday. Wadiyar had filed the petition in HC on 27 July claiming that Chamundi Hills belong to the royal family, and got stay against the State government order. The HC had now vacated this stay order,

Siddaramaiah PHOTO: PTI

Lakshmana said Governor Thawarchand Gehlot, who has been showing much enthusiasm over complaints filed by BJP leaders, is not showing same enthusiasm to issue prosecutions against BJP's Murugesh Nirani, Shashikala Jolle, JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy. State Lokayukta had written several letters to him to issue prosecution against them but he is now saying he has not received the letters. *—Salar News*

CM POST IS NOT VACANT, SAYS SHIVAKUMAR

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

After senior Congress leader RV Deshpande voiced his aspirations for Chief Minister's position, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday said there is no vacancy for the post of Chief Minister in Karnataka. "If it (the vacancy) were, such discussions could take place. Siddaramaiah is leading the government," Shivakumar said here.

About the consequences if there is an unfavourable ruling against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Muda case, Shivakumar said, "There won't be any impact. Siddaramaiah is the Chief Minister and will continue in that role." *—Salar News*

BJP functionary booked for 2023 sexual assault

MANGALURU, 2 SEPT

A case has been registered against BJP functionary Arun Kumar Puthila for allegedly sexually harassing a woman in Bengaluru in 2023, police said on Monday.

The alleged crime happened in a hotel in the city when the woman wanted to join the pro-Hindu movement started by Puthila. S

he later became a follower of the functionary on various social media sites, they said. According to the FIR registered on 1 September at the women's police station in Puttur in Dakshina Kannada, Puthila took advantage of her trust and invited her to a lodge in the City where he allegedly sexually assaulted her, besides blackmailing and threatening to kill her.

The complainant alleged that he used to threaten her by claiming that he had photographs, selfies, audio, and videos, which might damage her image in society.

- Puthila had contested as an independent candidate in the 2023 assembly elections. Later, he rejoined the BJP

Puthila had contested as an independent candidate in the 2023 assembly elections. Later, he rejoined the BJP.

In his response to the allegations, Puthila stated that it was a fake complaint and that he would go to the bottom of it and expose the ploy. He said it is being woven against him by his political opponents. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

HC ADJOURNS HEARING IN MUDA SCAM

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

High Court on Monday extended till 9 September the interim stay on trial court proceedings against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in connection with the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case.

The court adjourned for a week the hearing on Chief Minister's petition challenging the legality of Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's sanction for his prosecution in the case.

Appearing for the Respondent number 4 (R-4) Snehamayi Krishna, senior advocate KG Raghavan made submissions when the hearing resumed. "Interim order granted on August 19 shall continue till the next date of hearing," Justice M Nagaprasanna said.

The Governor on 16 August accorded sanction under Section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions of Pradeep Kumar SP, TJ Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna. On 19 August, Siddaramaiah moved to the High Court challenging the legality of the Governor's order.

In the petition, the Chief Minister submitted that the sanction order was issued without due application of mind, in violation of statutory mandates, and contrary to constitutional principles, including the advice of the Council of Ministers, which is binding under Article 163 of the Constitution of India.

—PTI

Charaka hospital reopens its doors again

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Charaka Super-speciality Hospital in Shivajinagar, which is attached to Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Research Institute, reopened its doors on Monday after being closed for more than three years.

The 130-bed Charaka hospital was launched in 2019 with 20 ICU beds and 20 ventilators at a cost of Rs 24.5 crore, including Rs 11 crore from Infosys Foundation. In 2020, the hospital ceased operations due to a lack of staff.

The hospital now offers seven specialised services, including cardiology, nephrology, urology and plastic surgery, The hospital costs the government Rs 16 crore annually. *—Salar News*

CM Siddaramaiah with DyCM DK Shivakumar, during the inauguration of the Shivajinagar Super Speciality Hospital *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

BMTC INTRODUCES NEW BUS ROUTES IN BENGALURU

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) on Monday announced the launch of several new bus routes across the City, effective from Monday. Among the newly introduced routes, Route No. 374-S will connect Nelamangala to Sumanahalli Junction,

Another new route, No. 516, will link Nelamangala to Kengeri TTMC.

Route No. 401-RA will connectChikkegowdanapalya to Yeshwanthpur TTMC. Route No. 154 from Hale Guddadahalli to Shivajinagar. Finally, Route No. 255-R will connect Yeshwantpur TTMC to Railway Gollahalli. *—Salar News*

IT corridor needs more Metro trains: Tejasvi

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Bengaluru South Member of Parliament Tejasvi Surya has urged Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) to increase the frequency of trains on the Purple Line connecting IT corridor to Majestic station during peak hours as commuters are increasingly finding it difficult to commute.

Surya along with MP of Bengaluru Central PC Mohan travelled by the Metro during the evening to get first-hand experience of the peak hour rush and listened to the woes of the commuters.

Speaking to **Salar News** on Monday while travelling from KR Pura Metro Station to Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station (Majestic), Surya said there is also a need to introduce short loop services wherever it is necessary.

He said the metro train frequency will be increased to three minutes from the existing three-and-a-half minutes. Surya asked the Metro authorities to change the signage at Majestic station as it was too confusing for the commuters. He urged the Metro rail authorities to make railway stations disabled friendly. The BJP MP said there was a problem with the safety doors in the Majestic station and that he had been assured by authorities that it would be set right.

He said a study was being done by the operations team of the Metro rail to ease the peak-hour traffic which was a priority. *—Salar News*

MP Tejasvi Surya interact with a passenger as he takes a ride from KR Puram Metro Station to Majestic on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

TO EASE CONGESTION

New passageway opens at Majestic Metro Stn

BENGALURU, 2 SEPT

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) inaugurated a new passageway at the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Metro Station on Monday to address the crowding issue.

The passage connects platform 1 of the Purple Line with platforms 3 and 4 of the Green Line, providing a direct route for passengers transferring between the two lines. This is especially significant as the station serves as a crucial interchange hub for the City's Metro network.

Sumit Bhatnagar, the Operation and Maintenance Director of BMRCL, said, "As the City's Metro usage continues to grow, it's essential to provide multiple access points for passengers. This passage will help alleviate congestion and make it easier for commuters to navigate the station."

The new entrance opened for commuters switching from GreenLine to Purple at Majestic Metro Station *PHOTO: X/@WF_WATCHER*

Before the opening of the new passage, passengers transferring from the Green Line to Whitefield or vice versa often faced difficulties due to limited escalators and stairways. Many missed their connecting trains due to overcrowding on platforms 1, 3, and 4.

While some commuters have welcomed this change, others have called for more measures to reduce overcrowding at the station. Gagan Hiremath, an IT professional, suggested that increasing the frequency of trains would be more effective in addressing the issue. Sanjana Kumaran, a lecturer at MES College, Mallershwaram told Salar News, "I miss the connecting train whenever I am in a hurry to board the Green Line Metro. Sometimes the train would have arrived and I miss it due to the rush in the escalators and the staircase. This passage is going to make the change easy for many commuters." *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

RaGa interacts with DTC employees, calls for justice

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday highlighted the issues being faced by DTC employees and said those who make the journey of lakhs of passengers smooth everyday have only gotten injustice in return. Sharing a video of his interaction with Delhi Transport Service (DTC) employees last week and a bus ride he undertook, Gandhi said on X that the DTC employees are asking the government that if they are permanent citizens, why are their jobs temporary. "A few days ago, after a pleasant bus ride in Delhi, I interacted with DTC employees and got to know about their daily routine and problems," the former Congress chief said in his post in Hindi. "No social security, no stable income and no permanent job - contractual labour has reduced a job of great responsibility to a state of compulsion," he said. Troubled with this neglect, like government employees across the country, DTC workers are also living under the constant fear of privatisation, he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sibal slams Dhankar over Kolkata rape case remark

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Monday fired back at Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar for criticising him over a purported SCBA resolution in which the senior lawyer reportedly described the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata as a "symptomatic malaise". Sibal said in a post on X, "Times of India (Report); Rapes (2017 to 2022). Out of 1,551 cases of rape/gangrape followed by murder. Uttar Pradesh reported maximum cases (280) followed by Madhya Pradesh (207), Assam (205), Maharashtra (155) and Karnataka (79). Dhankar ji: Seen this? Why West Bengal missing? No malaise?" Dhankhar has slammed Supreme Court Bar Association president Sibal for stating in a purported resolution that the tragic incident at Kolkata's State-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital was a "symptomatic malaise" and suggesting that such incidents were commonplace. "I am appalled?" the Vice-President said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Governors should not be a hurdle in governance: Singhvi

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Amid growing instances of run-ins between Governors and Opposition-ruled state governments, senior Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi on Monday said the Governor's post should either be abolished or a person of stature who is not into petty politics be appointed by consensus. Singhvi, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha unopposed from Telangana last week, also weighed in on the repeated standoffs between the Chair and the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament and called for reforms to ensure the Chair is not partisan. In an interview with PTI, the four-time MP said a very big failing of this government is that it "demeaned, devalued and diminished" every institution and there were several instances of Governors acting as a second chief executive or a "second sword in the same scabbard". *—PTI*

Open to collecting caste data for welfare, not politics: RSS

RSS says caste relations should be dealt with seriously

PALAKKAD, 2 SEPT

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) said on Monday it has no objection to collecting data on specific communities or castes, provided that the information is used for their welfare and not exploited as a political tool for electoral gains.

The caste-based census should only be used for the betterment of those communities or castes that are lagging rather than politics or election practises, said Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh Sunil Ambekar on Monday.

Addressing a press conference on the concluding day of RSS Samanvay Baithak Ambekar Ambekar said that the issues of caste and caste relations were very sensitive and should be dealt with very seriously as these were issues of our "national unity" and "integrity."

BJP National President JP Nadda and others during All India Coordination Meeting of RSS, in Palakkad, Kerala *PHOTO: PTI*

"As RSS, we had already commented on this issue. In our Hindu society, we have a sensitive issue of our caste and caste relations... It is an important issue of our national unity and integrity, so it should be dealt with very seriously, not just on the basis of elections, election practices or politics," he said.

"Definitely, for all welfare activities, particularly addressing a particular community or caste that is lagging and needs special attention, so if sometimes the government needs the numbers, it can take them. It (the government) has taken (the numbers) earlier also; it can take it, no problem. But it should be only to address the welfare of those communities and castes. It should not be used as a political tool for electioneering. And so we put a caution line for everyone," he added.

Ambekar also stated that during the baithak, the members had a thorough discussion on the incident of rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, after which they have come up with "five fronts" on which they will take up this issue.

He said the content that comes from all types of media has created "havoc," as it was observed that those who are involved in such types of incidents had been watching such content for long. *—Agencies*

BREACH OF TRUST

Kerala to probe top policemen

KOTTAYAM, 2 SEPT

Kerala government on Monday announced a high-level probe into the grave allegations raised by ruling LDF MLA PV Anvar against some top IPS officers, including law and order ADGP MR Ajith Kumar, a close confidant of Vijayan, a day after the charges triggered sharp reactions among Opposition parties.

Putting the CPI (M)-led government in a fix, the Nilambur legislator on Sunday accused Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's political secretary P Sasi and ADGP (Law and Order) Kumar of breaching trust and failing to deliver responsibilities honestly.

Breaking his silence over the matter, Vijayan on Tuesday sounded tough and said a high-level probe by a top-ranking officer would be held into the charges raised by the MLA.

Interestingly, Kumar was also present on the dais when he announced the probe.

He said that the issues that have arisen will be addressed with the utmost seriousness and without any prejudice, and any breach of discipline within the police force will not be tolerated at any cost.

Vijayan said that the government has always examined issues on their merit, regardless of their origin.

He made these remarks while speaking at a programme organised by the police association here.

The decision, he said, is to entrust a top-ranking officer to probe all the allegations, without specifically mentioning Anvar's allegations.

He also offered whole-hearted support to the honest and committed officers in the force.

Meanwhile, soon after the announcement of the probe, Anvar held a press conference in Malappuram and raised fresh allegations against the ADGP.

—PTI

Union MoS Jitendra Singh addresses a press conference ahead of J&K elections, in Jammu, Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

J&K election: BJP releases 4th list

JAMMU, 2 SEPT

BJP Monday released its fourth list of candidates for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls, fielding its union territory unit president Ravinder Raina from Nowshera in the Jammu region.

The 47-year-old Raina, who won from Nowshera in Rajouri district in the 2014 polls too, has been fielded again from his home constituency. Raina, who took over as the party president in Jammu and Kashmir in May 2018, thanked the party for reposing faith in him and expressed confidence of winning a majority of the seats in the Union Territory to form the next government. "The BJP's popularity has grown manifold over the years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who restored peace and normalcy in J-K besides ensuring development and justice to every section of the society in the past 10 years," he told PTI.

With the fresh list, the party has so far named 51 candidates, including 14 for the Kashmir Valley, where the BJP is yet to open its account in Assembly elections. Raina, who won from Nowshera in Rajouri district in the 2014 polls too, has been fielded again from his home constituency.

The other names in the list are: former MLC Vibodh Gupta from Rajouri (ST) in the Jammu region; and Aijaz Hussain (Lal Chowk), Arif Raja (Eidgah), Ali Mohammad Mir (Khansahib) and Zahid Hussain (Chrar-e-Sharief) from the Kashmir Valley.

The list was released on the approval of the party's central election committee. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which has a 90-member assembly, is going to polls in three phases on 18, 25 September, 1 October. *—PTI*

CONG RELEASES PHASE 2 LIST OF 6 CANDIDATES

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Congress on Monday released its second list of six candidates for the upcoming assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, fielding JKPCC chief Tariq Hameed Karra from Central Shalteng.

The list was released soon after Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) met here to finalise names of candidates for the elections, which the party is contesting in alliance with the National Conference.

Apart from J-K Pradesh Congress Committee chief Karra, the party has fielded Mumtaz Khan from Reasi, Bhupender Jamwal from Mata Vaishno Devi, Iftikhar Ahmed from Rajouri (ST), Shabbir Ahmed Khan from Thannamandi (ST) and Mohammad Shahnawaz Choudhary from Surankote (ST).

These constituencies will go to polls in the second phase of the three-phase assembly elections. The total number of candidates declared by the party is now 15.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, general secretary in-charge (organisation) KC Venugopal, Karra, Jammu and Kashmir screening committee chief Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and senior leader Salman Khurshid, among others, attended the meeting at the AICC headquarters here. *—PTI*

SC grants bail to Bibhav Kumar in Swati Maliwal assault case

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar in the Swati Maliwal assault case noting that he has been in custody for over 100 days.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan also took into account that the prosecution has proposed to examine more than 51 witnesses and said the trial will take time to conclude.

It also noted that since the charge sheet in the case has already been filed, Kumar's release will not cause any prejudice to the investigation. "Allegations are that the petitioner, who is personal secretary to Delhi chief minister, assaulted the complainant-victim who is a Rajya Sabha MP... Investigation in the case is complete. Charge sheet has been filed. We are not inclined to hear on the point as to where prima facie offense is made out. It's exclusive domain of trial court."

Bibhav Kumar *PHOTO: PTI*

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Delhi police, opposed the grant of bail at this stage. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who represented Kumar, said the invocation of the offence under Section 308 of the IPC was not justified. *—PTI*

Revolutionaries won't bow down to dictator, says AAP

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

AAP on Monday said its MLA Amanatullah Khan has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a false case and the more the ruling BJP tries to suppress the Arvind Kejriwal-led party's voice, the more vocal it will be. "Revolutionaries will not bow down to the tyranny of a dictator. BJP's ED took Aam Aadmi Party MLA @KhanAmanatullah ji in custody in a fake case. The more BJP people try to suppress us, the more vocal our voice will be," the AAP said on X. *—PTI*

EXCISE SCAM: SC GRANTS BAIL TO VIJAY NAIR

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to former AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, saying liberty is "sacrosanct".

Relying on the legal principle of "bail is rule and jail is exception" cited by a coordinate bench, the top court said pre-trial incarceration cannot be a punishment. A bench comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti noted that Nair has been in jail for the last 22 months in the money laundering case where the maximum punishment is seven years.

On 12 August, the bench had sought a response from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on the bail plea of Nair. Nair was arrested by the agency on 13 November, 2022. *—PTI*

Vijay Nair *PHOTO: X*

ICICI nullifies Congress allegations of Sebi Chief receiving salary

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

ICICI Bank on Monday said it has not paid any salary or granted ESOPs to Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch after her retirement on 31 October, 2013, as alleged by Congress.

Earlier in the day, the Congress alleged that Buch, who joined Sebi as a member in 2017 and subsequently became its chairperson, received Rs 16.8 crore from ICICI Bank as salary and other compensation.

"ICICI Bank or its group companies have not paid any salary or granted any ESOPs to Madhabi Puri Buch after her retirement, other than her retiral benefits. It may be noted that she had opted for superannuation with effect from 31 October, 2013," the bank said. During her employment with the ICICI Group, she received compensation in the form of salary, retiral benefits, bonus and ESOPs, in line with applicable policies, it added.

"Under the bank's ESOP rules, the ESOPs vest over the next few years from the date of allotment. As per rules existing at the time of her ESOP grant, employees, including retired employees, had the choice to exercise their ESOPs anytime up to a period of 10 years from the date of vesting," it said. *—PTI*

4 of family held in Pune ex-corporator's murder

PUNE, 2 SEPT

Pune Police probing the brutal murder of former corporator Vanraj Andekar has arrested four people, including his two sisters and their husbands, a senior officer said on Monday.

Prima facie, and family and property-related disputes are suspected to be the reasons for the murder. Andekar, who was in his late 30s, was associated with Nationalist Congress Party before the Pune civic body was brought under State administrator. Eight to nine people came on motorcycles and attacked Andekar in Nana Peth area at around 9.30 pm on Sunday. Some rounds were allegedly fired at Andekar. He was also attacked with sharp weapons on his neck and head, police said. The accused are Jayant Komkar, Ganesh Komkar, Kalyani and Sanjivani. The arrests were made after family members of Andekar alleged the involvement of the four in the FIR, the police officer said. *—PTI*

KANGANA TO MOVE COURT OVER 'EMERGENCY' HALT

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Four days ahead of the scheduled premiere of "Emergency", actor Kangana Ranaut has levelled allegations against the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for stalling its certificate to delay the release.

Ranaut, who plays the role of former prime minister Indira Gandhi in the movie, said she will go to court if she doesn't get a clearance on the uncut version.

"An emergency has been imposed on my film too. It's a very hopeless state. I'm quite disappointed in our country and whatever the circumstances are... How much will we keep getting scared?

According to a source, the film isn't releasing on Friday because the makers are yet to receive the certification from the CBFC.

"Even though they (CBFC) have put a U/A certificate on their website, the makers haven't received the copy of the certificate yet. Everyday there's a new cut being given to the film, which they are doing due to some pressure. Kangana is fighting for the sanctity of the film," the source told PTI. *—PTI*

Kangana Ranaut *PHOTO: X*

Will attack inside mosques: BJP MLA threatens Muslims

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

Police in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district have booked BJP MLA Nitesh Rane for provocative speeches in which he threatened Muslims.

Rane addressed two public meetings in Shrirampur and Topkhana areas in support of Hindu seer Mahant Ramgiri Maharaj, who was in the news last month for making derogatory remarks about Islam and Prophet Muhammad.

Rane said there would be repercussions if the Maharaj is harmed.

In a viral video, Rane can be heard saying if anyone says anything against Ramgiri Maharaj, "We will enter your mosques and hit you one by one. Keep this in mind."

A police official said Monday that two FIRs have been registered against Rane at Shrirampur and Topkhana police stations.

Sharing the video, AIMIM spokesperson, Waris Pathan, in a post on X requested Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis to arrest Rane. "Rane is spreading hatred against Muslims in his entire speech. This is inflammatory speech, hate speech. BJP is trying to create communal violence in Maharashtra before the state assembly elections," Pathan said.

Ramgiri Maharaj has been accused of making derogatory comments about Prophet Mohammad and Islam. Cases have been registered against him at many places in Maharashtra and Muslim leaders have been demanding his arrest. *—PTI*

KOLKATA HORROR

BJP protests across WB dists

KOLKATA, 2 SEPT

Former Union Minister Nisith Pramanik was arrested on Monday after BJP workers clashed with police in Cooch Behar during a demonstration against the alleged rape and murder of a doctor in a state-run Kolkata hospital early last month.

Saffron party workers held rallies in various districts of West Bengal during the day to protest the death of the on-duty medic that sparked nationwide outrage. Rallies were held before offices of district magistrates in Bardhaman, Malda, Coochbehar and Jhargram, among others.

In Cooch Behar, the agitators allegedly brick-batted the police and the personnel responded by using batons and tear gas to disperse the BJP workers, resulting in large-scale commotion.

Junior Doctors' Forum supporters demand the resignation of Kolkata police commissioner, in Kolkata *PHOTO: PTI*

Pramanick who led the rally was among the 22 arrested, a police official said. Barricades had been put up in front of the DMs' offices across the state by the police, which the saffron party workers tried to break.

The saffron party workers demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and also of Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

1 dead, 10 hurt as drunk man turns steering of bus

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

A 27-year-old woman injured after she was hit by an out-of-control BEST bus in Lalbaug of Mumbai the previous day died during treatment at a hospital, police said on Monday. The bus driver lost control of the vehicle after a drunk passenger grabbed the steering wheel during an argument on Sunday. The bus rammed into pedestrians, cars, and two-wheelers, leaving 10 people injured, three of them seriously. One of the injured person, Nupura Maniyar, was declared dead on Sunday late night at KEM Hospital. Some injured persons remain admitted at the same hospital, police and civic officials said on Monday. The drunk passenger, Datta Shinde, 45, was arrested. *—PTI*

In major haul, drugs worth Rs 30cr seized in Assam

GUWAHATI, 2 SEPT

In a major drug haul, Yaba tablets worth around Rs 30 crore were seized in Assam's Cachar district and three peddlers arrested, officials said on Monday. According to Karimganj Superintendent of Police Partha Protim Das, an anti-narcotics operation was launched on Sunday night at Jalalpur area under Badarpur police station after receiving specific input about the drugs. "A vehicle was intercepted and it led to the recovery of 1,00,000 Yaba tablets from a secret chamber of the vehicle. It was coming from Mizoram," he added. The police have apprehended three people, who hailed from Katigorah police station area of Cachar, Das told PTI. As per market rates, the value of the seizure have been estimated to be around Rs 30 crore. *—PTI*

Man held for showing obscene gesture to girl

GOPESHWAR, 2 SEPT

A 24-year-old man accused of making an obscene gesture at a teenage girl in Nandanagar tehsil of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district has been arrested, police said on Monday. The accused, a barber, was arrested on Sunday night from Bijnor in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. The incident had sparked tensions in Nandanagar on Sunday, with hundreds of people taking to the streets to demand the arrest of the accused. Angry villagers also attempted to vandalise the shop of the accused. In view of the sensitivity of the matter, which involves two different communities, Chamoli superintendent of police and other officials are still stationed in Nandanagar. *—PTI*

Delhi man stabs wife to death, leaves body in car

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

A 21-year-old man stabbed his wife to death and left her dead body in his car in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden area, officials said on Monday. The accused Gautam has been arrested while he was trying to run by a police officer patrolling in the area. According to the police, the matter came to the fore when a constable apprehended Gautam moving around without shirt at 1.20 am. On questioning, Gautam told the police that he had married Manya in March without the consent of their families and even after marriage, they were living with their respective families only but used to meet occasionally, On Sunday, Gautam came to meet Manya in a where Manya insisted that they should start living together and an argument between them took place. In a fit of rage, Gautam inflicted multiple stab injuries to Manya killing her. *—PTI*

Many scramble for food amid Andhra rains

Unprecedented downpour over past 3 days submerges multiple localities in Andhra

An Andhra resident rides an old refrigerator to avoid a flooded street caused by heavy rains from Tropical Storm Yagi, locally called Enteng, on Monday; Washed away railway tracks following heavy rainfall in Secunderabad *PHOTOS: PTI*

VIJAYAWADA, 2 SEPT

Scores of people scrambled for milk and food packets in flood-ravaged Vijayawada on Monday, and also complained about alleged government apathy towards their hardships in the past three days.

Unprecedented torrential downpour over the past three days submerged multiple localities in the centrally located commercial city.

Inundated localities included Ajit Singh Nagar, Nandamuri Nagar, Andhra Prabha colony, LBS Nagar, Vambay colony and Ayodhya Nagar. Other submerged areas included Madhura Nagar, Ramakrishna Puram, New Rajarajeswari Peta, Old Rajarajeswari Peta, Pipula Road, Payakapuram, Shanti Nagar, Prasanthi Nagar, Jakkampudi and Pathapadu.

Similar was the situation in Nainavaram, Chittinagar, Milk Project area, Bridge Peta and others. Visuals aired on local TV news channels showed a woman lamenting to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu that people were stranded for two days in Ajit Singh Nagar without drinking water. She complained to him that no boat came to their rescue while another man standing in waist deep waters begged Naidu, who was touring the flood-affected areas for the third time on a boat, to understand their predicament. "Please understand our situation sir (CM). We don't have water and food sir. Inundated till the first floor," the flood victim directly complained to Naidu.

People were seen wading through floodwaters carrying their children on shoulders to safety while an old woman lying on a mattress was seen being shifted over floodwaters by two persons. Some people tried to help themselves through the deluge using a rope. As people waded through the floodwaters, some of them held on to some basic necessities in their hands and a large queue was formed at one of the flood-affected places to collect milk sachets and food packets.

At a large queue formed for milk packets, a flood victim complained that they did not have milk since Sunday morning and alleged that no help came their way from the government. *—PTI*

HP: 100 roads closed after rains, MeT warns of flash floods

SHIMLA, 2 SEPT

A total of 109 roads including National Highway 707, were closed on Monday in Himachal Pradesh following rains, the state emergency operation centre said. As many as 427 power supply schemes have also been disrupted in the state. 151 people have died in rain-related incidents this year and the state has suffered loses to the tune of Rs 1,265 crore, officials said. *—PTI*

Landslides block highways in U'khand

Landslides triggered by heavy rain left the Badrinath national highway in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district blocked at several points. The highway is blocked at Pagalnala, Patalganga and Nandaprayag and efforts are being made to reopen it, the district disaster management centre here said. Seven shops in the Simli market were damaged by landslide debris, it said.

4 dead as rains pound Marathwada

Heavy rains pounded Marathwada region of Maharashtra over the last 24 hours ending at 9am on Monday, leaving four people dead and affecting normal life in rural areas, officials said. The wet spells affected people in at least 63 villages, damaging some houses and crops on 45 hectares of land, as per a preliminary assessment by Revenue authorities.

2 dead, girl injured in landslide on Reasi's Vaishno Devi track

Two women pilgrims from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh died while a five-year-old girl was grievously injured in a landslide on the new track to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Monday, officials said. Movement of pilgrims on the Himkoti track was halted following the landslide but the pilgrimage to the shrine atop Trikuta hills continued through the traditional Sanjhichatt route, they said. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha sanctioned an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the bereaved families. The deceased are Sapna, 27, of Dhianpur village in Punjab's Gurdaspur, and Neha, 23, of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

PRESIDENT'S M'RASHTRA TRIP

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday embarked on a three-day visit to Maharashtra by offering prayers at the famous temple of goddess Mahalaxmi in Kolhapur *PHOTO: ANI*

SC forms committee to resolve protesting farmers' grievances

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Observing that the issue of farmers' protest should not be politicised, the Supreme Court on Monday constituted a high-powered committee headed by former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Justice Nawab Singh to amicably resolve the grievances of protesting farmers at the Shambhu border.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the committee to convene its first meeting within a week and asked the panel to reach out to the agitating farmers to immediately remove their tractors, trolleys etc. from the Shambhu border between Punjab and Haryana to provide relief to commuters.

Both the Punjab and the Haryana governments will be free to give suggestions to the committee, it added.

The committee also comprises retired IPS officer P S Sandhu, Devender Sharma, professor Ranjit Singh Ghuman and Dr Sukhpal Singh, Agricultural Economist from the Punjab Agriculture University.

It also cautioned the protesting farmers to keep themselves at a safe distance from political parties and not to insist on demands which are not feasible.

The top court said the farmers' issues should not be politicised and be considered by the committee in a phased manner. *—PTI*

17 MONKEYS SHOT DEAD AT VILLAGE IN CHHATTISGARH

DURG, 2 SEPT

The Forest department has launched an investigation into the reported death of 18 to 19 monkeys in a village in Chhattisgarh's Bemetara district and recovered four rotten carcasses, a senior official said.

Sitaram Verma, Panch of the Belgaon village panchayat, however, claimed that at least 17 monkeys were shot dead on 28 August by two labourers hired by some villagers to chase away a pack of the simians, and accused the Forest department of trying to cover up the incident.

Contesting the claim, a senior forest department official said the exact cause behind the death of monkeys is yet to be ascertained even as some suspects are being questioned. Some monkeys were also injured in the incident, he said. According to Verma, a meeting was recently called in the village to hire labourers to keep a check on simians which invade houses and damage horticulture crops.

Verma claimed state government authorities were alerted about the killing of monkeys but they visited the village two days after the incident on 30 August for panchnama. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Durg Forest Division, Chandrashekhar Pardeshi, under whose jurisdiction Bemetara falls, said the rotten carcasses of four monkeys have been recovered so far from the village. The DFO and officials of forest, administration, and police visited Belgaon village on Sunday to inquire about the incident. *—PTI*

VOILENCE CONTINUES

Manipur intensifies combing ops after 2 killed by militants

IMPHAL, 2 SEPT

Manipur government has ordered the state police to conduct combing operations and sanitisation in areas bordering Imphal West district where two people were killed and nine others injured in an attack by suspected militants, officials said.

Commissioner (Home) N Ashok Kumar asked the director general of police to take steps to arrest those involved in the gun-and-bomb attack on Sunday and enhance vigil in the area to avoid any untoward incident.

"In view of recent incidents disturbing general law and order situation in fringe areas bordering Imphal West district and the necessity to keep preventive measures in place, I am to request you to kindly take up necessary action to conduct combing operations and sanitisation of areas falling in fringe areas bordering Imphal West district more particularly in the stretch from Keithelmanbi to Koutruk," the commissioner said in a letter to the DGP.

Police at a hospital after an attack on Koutruk villagers, in Imphal. Two people were killed and nine others were injured in the attack *PHOTO: PTI*

The stretch between Keithelmanbi in Kangpokpi district and Koutruk in Imphal West is around 32 km long and has been a focal point of consistent attacks since ethnic violence broke out in May last year. Meanwhile, suspected militants burnt at least five abandoned houses at a village in Manipur's Imphal West district before they were chased away by security forces, police said on Monday. The militants had started firing indiscriminately from hilltops to the low-lying valley areas of Koutruk and neighbouring Kadangband from Sunday afternoon and managed to reach the outskirts of Koutruk village, an officer said. *—PTI*

SC seeks Centre's reply on migrant welfare

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

The Supreme Court bench comprising justices CT Ravikumar and Sanjay Karol on Monday asked the Centre to file an affidavit giving details about compliance of its 2021 judgement and subsequent directions within three weeks on providing ration cards and other welfare measures to the migrant workers.

The top court, in 29 June, 2021 judgement and subsequent orders, had passed a slew of directions to the authorities asking them to undertake welfare measures, including giving ration cards to all migrant workers, who were distressed during the Covid-19 pandemic, registered with the 'e-Shram' portal.

The 'e-Shram' is a National Database of Unorganised Workers launched by the Ministry of Labour with a aim to facilitate delivery of welfare benefits and social security measures to unorganised sector workers across the country. A sharp exchange of words took place between lawyer Prashant Bhushan and Justice Karol when it was suggested to the advocate that since the pandemic was over the plea can be closed over. *—PTI*

IN BAHRAICH

Urine drenched teddies used to trap wolves

BAHRAICH, 2 SEPT

In a bid to catch wolves, the forest department here has initiated an innovative effort of using colourful teddy dolls soaked in children's urine as a bait to capture them, a senior forest official said.

Over the past few months, the Bahraich region has been plagued by a series of attacks by man-eating wolves targeting the children and villagers.

The forest department now has initiated an innovative effort by using brightly coloured "teddy dolls" as a false bait to capture these predators.

These dolls have been strategically placed near the riverbanks, close to the wolves' resting places and dens, and are being soaked in children's urine to simulate the natural human scent. Senior IFS officer Ramesh Kumar Pandey, said that wolves, jackals, foxes, coyotes and both domestic and wild dogs belong to the canid species.

These dolls have been strategically placed near the riverbanks, close to the wolves' resting places and dens *PHOTO: PTI*

He explained that historically, the British had attempted to eliminate wolves from this area, even offering rewards for killing them. However, despite these efforts, the wolves managed to survive and continue to inhabit the riverbank areas.

Pandey further explained that various types of bait are used to capture animals, including live bait, dead bait and false or masked bait.

The teddy dolls being used by the forest department can be considered a form of false bait, similar to how scarecrows are used in fields to protect crops from birds, he said. *—PTI*

Child killed as wolf terror continues in UP

A two-and-a-half-year-old girl was killed and a 70-year-old woman was injured in separate incidents of wolf attacks in Mahsi division. The victim Anjali was sleeping outside the house and a wolf snatched her, they said. Kamala Devi from Mauja Kotiya was injured when a wolf entered her house and attacked her.

CBI's 6,900 graft cases pending trials, 361 for 20 yrs

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

- Some delays have been observed in completion of investigation in certain cases, the report said.

Over 6,900 corruption cases probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) were pending trials in different courts, 361 for more than 20 years, according to the latest annual report of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Besides, as many as 658 corruption cases were pending CBI investigation, 48 for more than five years.

Of the total of 6,903 cases under trial before courts, 1,379 were pending for less than three years, 875 for more than three years and up to five years and 2,188 for more than five years and up to ten years, as on 31 December, 2023, the anti-corruption watchdog said.

As many as 2,100 cases were pending trial for more than ten years and up to twenty years, and 361 for more than 20 years, said the CVC's annual report 2023. The CVC report said that 12,773 appeals/revision, filed by the CBI and by the accused, were pending in different high courts and the Supreme Court. Of these, 501 were pending for more than 20 years, 1,138 for more than 15 years but less than 20 years, 2,558 for more than 10 years but less than 15 years, 3,850 for more than five years but less than 10 years, 2,172 for more than two years but less than five years and 2,554 for less than two years, said the report made public recently.

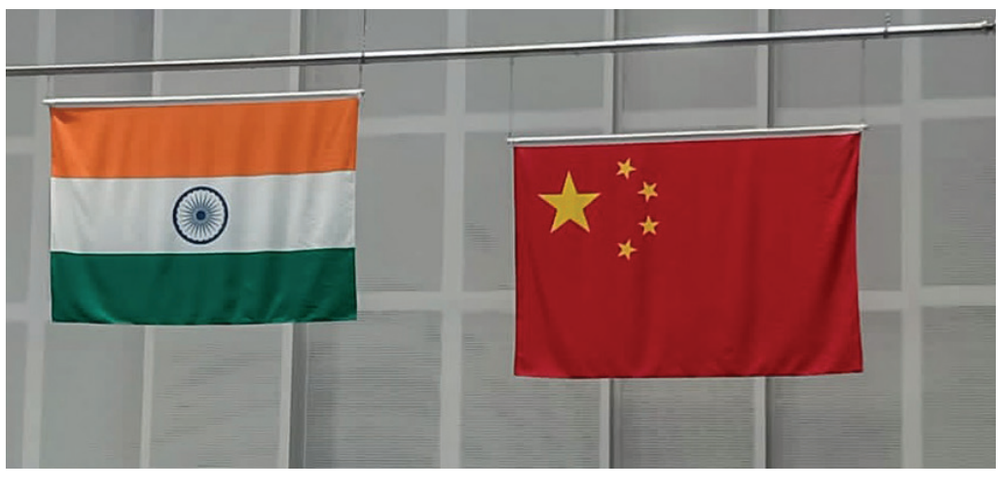
Some delays have been observed in completion of investigation in certain cases, the report said. During 2023, the CBI completed investigation in 873 cases -- 755 regular cases and 118 preliminary enquiries, the report said. *—PTI*

KENYA'S FIRST ROBOT WAITER

In a pioneering development, Nairobi, Kenya's capital, has unveiled a The Robot Café featuring three state-of-the-art humanoid robots named Claire, R24, and Nadia. These advanced robots are designed to take orders, retrieve food from the kitchen, and deliver it to patrons' tables, bringing a new level of efficiency and innovation to the dining experience. Nonetheless, Mohammed Abbas, the café's owner, along with other experts, believes that robots will not fully supplant human service

PHOTO: @AFRICANHUB_

India's reliance on China poses threat for US trade



Indian economy itself has become even more dependent on Chinese imports, in particular for the components that go into products like smartphones, solar panels and medicine ***PHOTO: ANI***

American businesses looking to reduce their reliance on China have increasingly been eyeing India in the past few years as a new manufacturing hub — and as a hedge against potential disruptions in Chinese supply chains caused by rising geopolitical tensions or another pandemic.

But as India has amped up its production of goods like smartphones, solar panels and medicine, the Indian economy itself has become even more dependent on Chinese imports, in particular for the components that go into these products, according to trade figures and economic analysts.

This dynamic serves as a reality check for US policymakers, who have been urgently promoting efforts to diversify supply chains away from Chinese factories and "de-risk" the commercial relationship with China.

India's imports from China have been growing twice as fast as those overall and now make up nearly a third of Indian imports in industries ranging from electronics and renewable energy to pharmaceuticals, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), an Indian think tank. These imports include finished products as well as intermediate goods for manufacturing.

Nearly two-thirds of Indian imports of electronic components, such as circuit boards and batteries, now come from China, the Confederation of Indian Industry says. And the volume of such Chinese imports has tripled during the past five years, GTRI reports.

India has long been a large exporter of pharmaceuticals, including to the United States. But while the domestic industry used to make much of its own ingredients, it now relies on China for many of its important pharmaceutical inputs, for instance for paracetamol. From 2007 to 2022, China's share in Indian imports of chemicals and pharmaceuticals grew by more than 50 percent and over just the past five years, Indian imports from China of pharmaceutical ingredients and other intermediate drug products are up by more than half, according to the GTRI report.

To support the production of Indian textiles and garments, another important export industry, India has been ramping up imports of yarn and fabric from China. Even the automobile industry — considered a success story for both domestic and export sales — has been increasing its imports of vehicle parts and accessories from China.

As with electronics, India has made significant strides in producing solar panels but now relies even more on the Chinese solar cells that go in them.After the United States restricted imports of Chinese solar panel material due to concerns about human rights and labor abuses, Indian exports of solar panels to the American market spiked in 2022, increasing in value by almost 150 percent, according to US government trade figures. The next year saw an even sharper increase.

During that time, however, India sourced between half and all of its solar panel components — such as modules, cells, wafers and solar glass — from China between 2021 and 2023, according to a BloombergNEF report at the end of last year. Senior Biden administration officials said it is not realistic to think that inputs from China can be excluded at this moment from American supply chains. "We have taken a more practical view that in order to effectively diversify, the first step is to get a foothold in the parts of this supply chain where you can diversify today. And then from there you can grow upstream," a senior administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive strategies toward China, said. India also continues to rely on Russia for crude oil, despite U.S. sanctions imposed on Russia because of its war in Ukraine. Much of India's defense equipment also remains Russian, though New Delhi has been shifting to other suppliers.

Even as India has tried to produce its own components for manufactured goods, it has remained dependent on China for expertise. Representatives of Indian industry have pressed the government to loosen restrictions on visas for Chinese technicians so they can help Indians use Chinese machinery to make smartphones as well as textiles and even shoes.

Many Indian analysts urge, ironically, that to diversify from China, India may need to lean into the relationship.

The Indian government's chief economic adviser, V Anantha Nageswaran, has proposed also loosening restrictions on Chinese investments. "To boost Indian manufacturing and plug India into the global supply chain, it is inevitable that India plugs itself into China's supply chain," said the recent economic survey prepared by his office. "Whether we do so by relying solely on imports or partially through Chinese investments is a choice that India has to make."

India shut the doors to Chinese investments after the countries' troops clashed along the Himalayan border in Ladakh in 2020, leaving at least 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead and igniting widespread boycotts of Chinese goods. Now, more than 50,000 troops are poised on either side of the disputed border, and dozens of rounds of negotiations have yet to produce a breakthrough.

Since 2020, Chinese investment proposals and those from other neighboring countries been evaluated in a case-by-case process, which government and industry figures say is slow and tedious.

—Courtesy, The Washington Post

SALAR

Deadly mosquito-borne disease puts US on edge

Health authorities in the United States are issuing warnings and closing public parks due to a rare but potentially deadly mosquito-borne disease.

This week, a resident of the US state of New Hampshire died after being hospitalised with eastern equine encephalitis. Cases have also been detected in other states. But what is eastern equine encephalitis? How is it spread? What, as the name suggests, do horses have to do with it? And is it a problem for Australia?

What is eastern equine encephalitis?

Eastern equine encephalitis is caused by a virus typically only found in some eastern parts of the Americas, from Central America to Canada.

Eastern equine encephalitis virus causes neurological disease, particularly encephalitis (inflammation and swelling of the brain) and is transmitted to humans via a mosquito bite. Symptoms can be severe and potentially fatal.

But most people bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus won't have symptoms. For those who develop disease, symptoms include headache, neck stiffness, confusion, seizures and coma. About one-third of patients with severe symptoms will die and many of those who survive have ongoing neurological problems. Wild, farmed and captive birds can also be infected with the virus and, in some species develop disease. In fact, birds are key to how the virus spreads.

Birds – especially passerines, a group that includes robins, starlings, thrushes and blue jays – are the main hosts of the virus.

Bird-feeding mosquitoes in forested wetlands, especially Culiseta melanura, allow the virus to circulate among birds. But this mosquito rarely bites people so it isn't as important for outbreaks of human disease.

It's the mosquitoes that feed on both birds and mammals that transmit the virus to humans and horses. These include Aedes, Coquillettidia and Culex mosquitoes. But once infected, humans and horses do not spread the virus. That's because they don't produce high enough levels of the virus to infect mosquitoes.

How can we limit the spread?

There are no specific treatments for infection with eastern equine encephalitis virus, or any licensed vaccines for use in people. There is a vaccine registered for veterinary use to prevent virus infection in horses. Personal protective measures and mosquito control are the main strategies to limit people being exposed to the virus.

Outbreaks can have a significant impact on communities, not only from the disease itself, but from measures implemented to limit transmission. There have also been concerns about the widespread use of aerial "fogging" to kill mosquitoes as commonly used chemicals are not specific to mosquitoes and may pose a risk to other insects.

Why is there an outbreak now?

The virus circulates year-round in tropical areas such as Florida. In the north-east of the US, the virus has more sporadic activity. Here, it's typically introduced by migratory birds and is active in the warmer months when mosquito populations are thriving.

The virus has been known for many decades and a number of outbreaks have been reported in North America. One of the last substantial outbreaks was in 2019 across several north-eastern US states, when there were 38 human cases (including 12 deaths).

A number of factors are likely at play in determining future outbreaks and the spread of the virus to new regions, including the climate, environmental factors, the activity of mosquitoes and wildlife, and also, importantly, people.

Is there a risk to Australia?

There is no evidence that eastern equine encephalitis virus is in Australia and there is no immediate risk of its introduction here. While Culiseta mosquitoes are found in Australia, their role in local virus outbreaks in people or animals is not well understood. But there are dozens of different mosquitoes involved in the spread of alphaviruses in Australia. That's the group that includes eastern equine encephalitis virus, as well as ones that exist in Australia, namely Ross River and Barmah Forest viruses. It's reasonable to assume some of these mosquitoes may be able to transmit the virus but this hasn't been tested in laboratory experiments.

There is very little information on how local passerine birds may play a role in establishing cycles of viral transmission in Australia. There is also no information on whether native Australian vertebrates, such as marsupials, would respond to infection.

—CourtesyThe Conversation

Eastern equine encephalitis is caused by the eastern equine encephalitis virus found in North and South America ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Chocolate's future hinges on success of growing cocoa in labs

California Cultured, a plant cell culture company, is growing cocoa from cell cultures at a facility in West Sacramento ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Climate change is stressing rainforests where the highly sensitive cocoa bean grows, but chocolate lovers need not despair, say companies that are researching other ways to grow cocoa or develop cocoa substitutes.

Scientists and entrepreneurs are working on ways to make more cocoa that stretch well beyond the tropics, from Northern California to Israel.

California Cultured, a plant cell culture company, is growing cocoa from cell cultures at a facility in West Sacramento, California, with plans to start selling its products next year. It puts cocoa bean cells in a vat with sugar water so they reproduce quickly and reach maturity in a week rather than the six to eight months a traditional harvest takes, said Alan Perlstein, the company's chief executive. The process also no longer requires as much water or arduous labour.

"We see just the demand of chocolate monstrously outstripping what is going to be available," Perlstein said. "There's really no other way that we see that the world could significantly increase the supply of cocoa or still keep it at affordable levels without extensive either environmental degradation or some significant other cost."

Cocoa trees grow about 20 degrees north and south of the equator in regions with warm weather and abundant rain, including West Africa and South America.

Climate change is expected to dry out the land under the additional heat. So scientists, entrepreneurs and chocolate-lovers are coming up with ways to grow cocoa and make the crop more resilient and more resistant to pests — as well as craft chocolatey-tasting cocoa alternatives to meet demand.

The market for chocolate is massive with sales in the United States surpassing USD 25 billion in 2023, according to the National Confectioners Association. Many entrepreneurs are betting on demand growing faster than the supply of cocoa. Companies are looking at either bolstering the supply with cell-based cocoa or offering alternatives made from products ranging from oats to carob that are roasted and flavoured to produce a chocolatey taste for chips or filling.

The price of cocoa soared earlier this year because of demand and troubles with the crop in West Africa due to plant disease and changes in weather. The region produces the bulk of the world's cocoa.

"All of this contributes to a potential instability in supply, so it is attractive to these lab-grown or cocoa substitute companies to think of ways to replace that ingredient that we know of as chocolatey-flavored," said Carla D. Martin, executive director of the Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute and a lecturer in African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

The innovation is largely driven by demand for chocolate in the US and Europe, Martin said. While three-quarters of the world's cocoa is grown in West and Central Africa, only 4 per cent is consumed there, she said.

The push to produce cocoa indoors in the US comes after other products, such as chicken meat, have already been grown in labs. It also comes as supermarket shelves fill with evolving snack options — something that developers of cocoa alternatives say shows people are ready to try what looks and tastes like a chocolate chip cookie even if the chip contains a cocoa substitute.

They said they also are hoping to tap into rising consciousness among consumers about where their food comes from and what it takes to grow it, particularly the use of child labour in the cocoa industry.

Planet A Foods in Planegg, Germany, contends the taste of mass market chocolate is derived largely from the fermentation and roasting in making it, not the cocoa bean itself. The company's founders tested out ingredients ranging from olives to seaweed and settled on a mix of oats and sunflower seeds as the best tasting chocolate alternative, said Jessica Karch, a company spokesperson. They called it "ChoViva" and it can be subbed into baked goods, she said.

"The idea is not to replace the high quality, 80 per cent dark chocolate, but really to have a lot of different products in the mass market," Karch said.

Yet while some are seeking to create alternative cocoa sources and substitutes, others are trying to bolster the supply of cocoa where it naturally grows.

Mars, which makes M&Ms and Snickers, has a research facility at University of California, Davis aimed at making cocoa plants more resilient, said Joanna Hwu, the company's senior director of cocoa plant science. The facility hosts a living collection of cocoa trees so scientists can study what makes them disease-resistant to help farmers in producing countries and ensure a stable supply of beans. "We see it as an opportunity, and our responsibility," Hwu said.

In Israel, efforts to expand the supply of cocoa are also under way. Celeste Bio is taking cocoa bean cells and growing them indoors to produce cocoa powder and cocoa butter, said co-founder Hanne Volpin. In a few years, the company expects to be able to produce cocoa regardless of the impact of climate change and disease — an effort that has drawn interest from Mondelez, the maker of Cadbury chocolate.

"We only have a small field, but eventually, we will have a farm of bioreactors," Volpin said.. *—AP*

PHOTO: DREAMWORLD

Tiger bites handler at Australian amusement park

MELBOURNE, 2 SEPT

A tiger bit an animal handler on the arm Monday at an Australian amusement park, officials said. The woman was taken by ambulance from Dreamworld in Coomera in Queensland state to the Gold Coast University Hospital in stable condition, Queensland Ambulance Service director Justin Payne said. Staff managed the bleeding as an ambulance was called to Dreamworld just before 9am, Payne said. The amusement park opens to the public at 10am. "We were advised that at that location a 47-year-old female, had been bitten b," Payne said. Dreamworld says on its website that it has nine Sumatran and Bengal tigers at its Tiger Island exhibit. The amusement park described the attack t as an "isolated and rare incident". *—AP*

3 dead, 2 injured in Hawaii shooting

HONOLULU, 2 SEPT

Three people were killed and two others injured in a shooting at a home stemming from a dispute between neighbors on Saturday night in Hawaii, police said. The shooter was also fatally shot by a resident, who was arrested on a second-degree murder charge. Witnesses reported that a 58-year-old man was using a front-end loader to ram cars into the home where a family gathering was taking place, then opened fire at people gathered in the carport, fatally shooting three women at the residence in Wainanae, a community about 48km west of downtown Honolulu, police detective Lt. Deena Thoemmes said. The shootings are the latest of several shootings in recent weeks that have led to police to pledge to work to fight gun violence. *—AP*

Poland holds state burial for victims of WWII massacres

WARSAW, 2 SEPT

Poland on Monday held a state burial of the remains of over 700 victims of Nazi Germany's World War II executions that were recently uncovered in the so-called Valley of Death in the country's north. The observances in the town of Chojnice included a funeral Mass at the basilica and interment with military honours at the local cemetery. The remains of Polish civilians, including patients of an asylum, were exhumed in 2021-2024 from two separate sites near Chojnice. Poland lost 6 million citizens, or a sixth of its population, of which 3 million were Jewish, in the war. The country also suffered huge losses to its infrastructure, industry and agriculture. *—AP*

Truck hits bar in Dominican Republic, 11 killed

SAN JUAN, 2 SEPT

At least 11 people were killed and more than 30 injured when a truck plowed into a bar in the Dominican Republic, authorities said. The crash occurred in the early hours of Sunday in the southern community of Azua, located west of the capital, Santo Domingo, Juan Salas, the director of civil defense, told The Associated Press. One of the victims was a police sergeant, said police spokesman Diego Pesqueira. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the crash, although authorities are reviewing cameras in the area, Salas said. Pesqueira said the driver of the truck fled the scene and has not been found. He said police detained a passenger in the truck, which was transporting avocados. Most of the injured were taken to a nearby hospital. Their condition was not known, Salas said. *—AP*

General strike in Israel over hostages leads to shutdown

People block a road as they protest, calling for a deal for the immediate release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip by Hamas PHOTO: PTI

TEL AVIV, 2 SEPT

A rare call for a general strike in Israel to protest the failure to return hostages held in Gaza led to closures and other disruptions around the country on Monday, including at its main international airport. But it was ignored in some areas, reflecting deep political divisions.

Tens of thousands of Israelis had poured into the streets late Sunday in grief and anger after six hostages were found dead in Gaza. The families and much of the public blamed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying they could have been returned alive in a deal with Hamas to end the nearly 11-month-old war.

Israel's largest trade union, the Histadrut, called for a general strike for Monday, the first since the start of the war. It aims to shut down or disrupt major sectors of the economy, including banking, health care and the country's main airport.

Airlines at Israel's main international airport Ben-Gurion were halting outgoing flights between 8am and 10am. Those flights either departed early or were slightly delayed, and travelers were seen lining up at check-in counters despite the limited disruption. Arriving flights were continuing as usual during that time, according to the Israel Airports Authority.

Banks, some large malls and government offices were all closed due to the strike and public transit was limited. Municipalities in Israel's populated central area, including Tel Aviv, were participating in the strike, leading to shortened school hours and cancellations for public daycares and kindergartens.

Netanyahu has pledged "total victory" over Hamas and blames it for the failure of the negotiations, which have dragged on for much of this year. Israel said Hamas killed all six hostages shortly before Israeli forces arrived in the tunnel where they were being held.

Hamas blamed it on Israel and the United States, accusing them of dragging out the talks by issuing new demands, including for lasting Israeli control over two strategic corridors in Gaza. Hamas has offered to release the hostages in return for an end to the war, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces and release of Palestinian prisoners, including high-profile militants. *—AP*

47 injured in Russian attack on Kharkiv

Kyiv says more than 10 missiles were fired

KHARKIV, 2 SEPT

At least 47 people, including five children, have been injured after a Russian missile attack on Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv.

The attack, which began at about 1pm on Sunday, hit a shopping mall and a major sports centre in the northeastern city, which is not far from the border with Russia.

Mayor Ihor Terekhov said the Saltivskyi and Nemyshlianskyi districts came under attack, with the prosecutor general saying Russia used Iskander missiles.

Seven children were among the injured with the youngest just three months old.

"Several people are in a very serious condition," Ukrainska Pravda reported the mayor as saying.

He added that rescue teams and ambulances who responded to the call also came under fire.

"The enemy launched a cynical repeat strike on our city ... leaving doctors injured," Terekhov said.

Firefighters extinguish the fire after a Russian missile attack in Kharkiv, Ukraine, on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

The attack comes just a few days after at least seven people were killed and dozens injured when Russian weapons struck an apartment block in the city starting a fire.

Following Sunday's attack, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reiterated his call for Ukraine's Western allies to allow the country to use their weapons on targets deeper inside Russia. Zelenskyy argues such a move would allow Ukraine to more effectively reduce the Russian military threat.

Ukraine's air defence units destroyed dozens of cruise and ballistic missiles early on Monday morning. *—AP*

17 bodies found after Russian tourist chopper crash

MOSCOW , 2 SEPT

A helicopter carrying 22 people crashed in the country's Far East, Russia's Emergencies Ministry announced. None of those on board survived, CNN reported, citing Russian state media TASS.

Seventeen bodies of those on board had been found by Sunday evening local time, the ministry said.

The helicopter, which had 19 passengers and three crew members on board, took off near the Vachkazhets volcano on Saturday and was headed to the village of Nikolaevka when it went down, the governor of the Kamchatka region, Vladimir Solodov, said Saturday on Telegram after the search began.

"The helicopter had taken off near the region's Vachkazhets volcano, a tourist attraction in the remote Kamchatka Peninsula, and was heading towards the village of Nikolaevka," Solodov said.

A rescue team found the wreckage on Sunday at an altitude of 900 metres, or almost 3,000 feet, not far from where the helicopter's crew had last made contact, Russia's ministry of emergencies said on Telegram. *—ANI*

11 DISTRICTS HIT

B'desh floods: 59 dead, 53 lakh people homeless

DHAKA, 2 SEPT

Floodwaters have receded in most areas of the 11 affected districts, but the struggles of those impacted continue, as the disaster has left many homeless, The Daily Star reported.

At least 59 people died, and over 53 lakh people in 11 districts were affected by the flood.

Many people have been left without homes, and low-income families, especially farmers, have lost not only their houses but also their livelihoods due to the destruction of crops and ponds, as per The Daily Star.

"Floodwaters swept away my mud house. It's all I had in this world. Now, I have no place to live," said a devastated Nurun Begum, 65, of Mierpara village in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila.

"I've had to taken shelter on the front porch of one of my neighbour's house," she explained in a helpless voice.

"My house quickly went underwater after the embankment along the Manu river got breached on 22 August. Even though the floodwater has receded, I cannot return home as my house has been damaged," Sujan Mia, an autorickshaw driver from the same village, said.

According to Moulvibazar District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Mohammad Sadu Mia, around 8,786 houses have been damaged by the recent flood in the district.

"We have already sent a letter to higher authorities concerned seeking allocation to rehabilitate the flood victims," he said.

According to a government report yesterday, over seven lakh families are still marooned across the country, though flood situations are improving gradually.

Flooding has subsided entirely in several districts. *—ANI*

Around 8,786 houses have been damaged in the flood PHOTO: PTI

Brazil top court upholds judge's decision to block X

BRASÍLIA, 2 SEPT

A Brazilian Supreme Court panel has upheld the decision of one of its justices to block billionaire Elon Musk's social media platform X nationwide, according to the court's website.

The broader support among justices deals a blow to Musk and his supporters who have sought to characterize Justice Alexandre de Moraes as a renegade and authoritarian censor of political speech.

The panel is comprised of five of the full bench's 11 justices, including de Moraes, who last Friday ordered the platform blocked for having failed to name a local legal representative, as required by law. X will remain blocked until it complies with his orders and pays outstanding fines that as of last week exceeded USD 3 million, according to his decision.

De Moraes' also set a daily fine of USD 8,900 for people or companies using virtual private networks, or VPNs, to access X. Some legal experts questioned the grounds for that decision and how it would be enforced, including Brazil's bar association, which said it would request the Supreme Court review that provision. But the majority of the panel on Monday upheld both the block and VPN fine — with one justice opposing the latter, unless users are shown to be using X to commit crimes.

Brazil is one of the biggest markets for X, with tens of millions of users. And its block marked a dramatic escalation in a monthslong feud between Musk and de Moraes over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation.

President Luiz Inácio Lula had da Silva backed de Moraes' decision and took aim at Musk for positioning himself as though he was above the law during an interview. *—AP*

PHOTO: X@AJEnglish

Musk calls 'X', 'Twitter'; mocked

Elon Musk, who renamed Twitter to X, seems to have forgotten the new name as he recently referred to the platform by its former name. He referred to X as "Twitter" in a post after the platform was banned in Brazil. He shared a meme that showed a person lying on a pile of money, with the caption "POV: VPN companies after Brazil banned Twitter." The post soon went viral with over 65 million views with users commenting, "The rebranding is going so well that even the CEO still calls it Twitter," said an individual". *—Agencies*

Breakthrough for Germany's far right in state elections

BERLIN, 2 SEPT

The Alternative for Germany party's success in two state elections piled new pressure on Chancellor Olaf Scholz's fractious government and left the country's main opposition party facing political contortions on Monday to find a way to govern a pair of eastern regions without involving the far-right party.

Alternative for Germany, or AfD, became the first far-right party to win a state election in post-World War II Germany in Thuringia on Sunday under one of its hardest-right figures, Björn Höcke. In Saxony, it finished only just behind the mainstream conservative Christian Democratic Union, which leads the national opposition. Voters punished the three parties in Scholz's governing coalition, which took well under 15 per cent of the vote between them. A new party founded by a prominent leftist was the second big winner on Sunday — and will probably be needed to form state governments since no one is prepared to govern with AfD. AfD's strength in the east has pushed other parties into unconventional coalitions as far back as 2016, but Sunday's results took that to a new level. *—AP*

Mpox concerns grow as Pakistan reports fifth case

PESHAWAR, 2 SEPT

Pakistan is facing a growing concern over the spread of mpox as Peshawar reports its fifth case this year, raising fears that the city may be emerging as a hub for patients arriving from the Gulf region, The Express Tribune reported.

A 47-year-old man who recently returned from the Gulf region has tested positive for the virus and was isolated by Border Health Services staff on 29 August.

"This is the fifth mpox case reported in Pakistan this year and the fourth since WHO declared mpox a global health emergency," said Dr Shabana Saleem, Federal Director General of Health.

PHOTO: X @KILLIDRADIO

Further, she noted the virus's resurgence in Peshawar as a serious concern, urging immediate action to prevent further transmission. According to The Express Tribune, Pakistani authorities have strengthened health screening measures at airports across the country. *—ANI*

Aus daycare worker guilty of raping dozens of girls

CANBERRA, 2 SEPT

A former childcare worker in Australia has admitted to sexually abusing dozens of girls in one of the worst paedophile cases in the country's history.

Ashley Paul Griffith on Monday pleaded guilty to 307 charges involving children in his care, including 28 counts of rape, 90 counts of indecent treatment and 67 counts of making child exploitation material.

The offences were carried out against some 60 children, many of them under 12, at childcare centres in Australia and Italy over a span of more than 19 years.

The judge's associate at the District Court in Brisbane took more than two hours to read out the charges against Griffith, 46, who appeared emotionless as he pleaded guilty to every charge, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

He was arrested in 2022 and charged with child exploitation offences. Prosecutors later charged the Gold Coast, Queensland man with more than 1,600 offences against 91 girls, but most of those charges were dropped before Monday's hearing. Police said they had been searching for Griffith since discovering a collection of child exploitation images and videos circulating on the dark web in 2014. *—Courtesy, Al-Jazeera*

SCHOOLS SHUT

14 dead as storm Yagi lashes Philippines

MANILA, 2 SEPT

A storm set off landslides and unleashed pounding rains that flooded many northern Philippine areas overnight into Monday, leaving at least 14 people dead and prompting authorities to suspend classes and government work in the densely populated capital region.

Tropical Storm Yagi was blowing 115km northeast of Infanta town in Quezon province, southeast of Manila, by midday on Monday with sustained winds of up to 75km per hour and gusts of up to 90kph, according to the weather bureau.

The storm, locally called Enteng, was moving northwestward at 15kph near the eastern coast of the main northern region of Luzon, where the weather bureau warned of possible flash floods and landslides in mountainous provinces.

A resident rides a refrigerator to avoid a flooded street caused by heavy rains from tropical storm Yagi, on Monday in Philippines PHOTO: PTI

A landslide hit two small shanties on a hillside in Antipolo city on Monday in Rizal province just to the west of the capital, killing at least three people, including a pregnant woman, disaster-mitigation officer Enrilito Bernardo Jr.

Four other villagers drowned in swollen creeks, he said.

National police spokesperson Col Jean Fajardo told reporters without elaborating that two other people died and 10 others were injured in landslides set off by the storm in the central Philippines.

Two residents died in stormy weather in Naga city in eastern Camarines Sur province, where floodwaters swamped several communities, police said. Authorities were verifying if the deaths, including one caused by electrocution, were weather-related.

Sea travel was temporarily halted in several ports affected by the storm, stranding more than 3,300 ferry passengers and cargo workers. *—AP*

PHOTO: X

Gold declines ₹250; silver tumbles by ₹1,700

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Gold prices declined by Rs 250 to Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday due to tepid demand from local jewellers and retailers. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday. Silver also tumbled by Rs 1,700 to Rs 85,500 per kg due to reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also fell by Rs 250 to Rs 73,750 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the fall in gold prices to subdued demand from local jewellers and stockists. Globally, Comex gold was trading higher at USD 2,531.10 per ounce. "Gold prices had surged to USD 2,564 per ounce, driven by a weaker dollar and safe-haven demand amid rising geopolitical tensions," Kaynat Chainwala said. —*PTI*

Rupee falls 3 paise to ₹83.88 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

Rupee declined 3 paise to hit 83.88 against the US dollar in early trade on Monday amid fluctuating crude oil prices. Forex traders said volatility in the international dollar trade and limited movement in the Brent crude rates contributed to the decline in the domestic currency in early trade.The positive domestic equity market, inflow of foreign fund and weak greenback capped the rupee's fall, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened 2 paise lower at 83.87 against the American currency and inched up to touch Friday's closing rate of 83.85 before slipping again.—*PTI*

Sterlite acquires Khavda IV C Power Transmission

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Sterlite Power on Monday announced the acquisition of Khavda IV C Power Transmission Ltd, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for evacuation of renewable energy from Khavda RE park. The Phase-IV transmission scheme aims to evacuate an additional 7 GW of renewable energy from this park with a scheduled COD (commissioning) of 24 months from the SPV acquisition, according to a company statement. The company announced the acquisition of Khavda IV C Power Transmission Ltd, an SPV from REC Power Development and Consultancy Ltd, it said. Sterlite Power, a power transmission developer and global products and services provider, has secured Khavda Phase-IV (7GW): Part C project to develop the transmission system for evacuating power from the potential renewable energy zone in the Khavda region in Gujarat.—*PTI*

Bharath Sesha is Philips MD for Indian subcontinent

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Philips on Monday said it has appointed Bharath Sesha as the managing director for the Indian subcontinent. His appointment will be effective from 1 September. He will manage the healthcare business headquartered in Gurgaon, and hold responsibility for Philips' licence to operate in India, which includes the Philips Innovation Campus in Bengaluru, the Healthcare Innovation Centre (HIC) in Pune, and Global Business Services in Chennai, it said. Sesha succeeds Daniel Mazon, who was Vice Chairman and Managing Director for the Philips Indian Subcontinent until April 1, 2024, and has since taken on a global role at the Philips headquarters in the Netherlands, it added.—*PTI*

Sensex rises 194 pts to close at record high on rate cut hopes

50-share Nifty index climbed 42.80 points or 0.17 per cent

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

Logging its longest winning run in nearly a year, benchmark BSE Sensex rose for the 10th straight day to close at a fresh lifetime high on Monday, tracking foreign fund inflows and a rally in the US markets.

The 30-share Sensex rose by 194.07 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at a record high of 82,559.84. During the day, it surged 359.51 points or 0.43 per cent to reach a new intra-day record peak of 82,725.28. The index surged for the 10th straight session, which is its longest gaining streak since September 2023 when it rose for nine straight days in the first half of the month. The NSE Nifty rose for the 13th straight day, which experts said, was its longest winning run in decades.

The 50-share index climbed 42.80 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at a lifetime high of 25,278.70. During the day, it soared 97.75 points or 0.38 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day peak of 25,333.65. In a 13-day gaining streak since August 14, the Nifty has rallied 4.72 per cent or nearly 1,140 points. Sensex has risen by 2.65 per cent or 2,135.16 points in its 10 straight days of gains.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, HCL Tech, ITC, IndusInd Bank were the biggest gainers *PHOTO: PTI*

Expectations of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve this month and renewed foreign fund inflows have fuelled the recent rally in domestic equities, traders said. FMCG, IT and financial sector shares supported the record run in indices while metal and pharma sector shares ended in the red. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, HCL Tech, IndusInd Bank, ITC, UltraTech Cement, Axis Bank and Infosys were the biggest gainers. On the other hand, Tata Motors, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro and Power Grid were among the laggards.

"Nifty ended on a positive note on Monday extending gains for the 13th consecutive session, its longest run in decades," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. In the BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.47 per cent and the midcap index dipped 0.03 per cent.

Among the indices, FMCG jumped 0.75 per cent, financial services (0.55 per cent), IT (0.37 per cent) and bankex (0.32 per cent). —*PTI*

Manufacturers see softer increases in new businesses

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

India's manufacturing sector growth moderated in August as output and sales rose at slowest rates since January, while competitive pressures and inflation concerns hampered business confidence, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 57.5 in August, below July's reading of 58.1 but above its long-run average of 54.0, signalling a substantial improvement in operating conditions.In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "New orders and output also mirrored the headline trend, with some panellists citing fierce competition as a reason for slowdown," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

According to the survey, new business rose sharply through the second quarter of the fiscal year, but the pace of expansion eased to a seven-month low.

New export orders, likewise, increased at the weakest pace since the start of the 2024 calendar year. "On a positive note, the rise in input costs slowed sharply. Manufacturers increased their raw material buying activity in order to build safety stocks. In line with input costs, the pace of output price inflation also decelerated, but the deceleration was to a much smaller extent, thereby increasing margins for manufacturers," Bhandari added. —*PTI*

Cabinet approves ₹14,000 crore for 7 major agri schemes

Rs 2,291 crore has been approved for strengthening agricultural education and management *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

The Union Cabinet on Monday approved around Rs 14,000 crore outlay for seven big-ticket programmes related to the farming sector, including a Rs 2,817-crore digital agriculture mission and a Rs 3,979-crore scheme for crop science.

These announcements were made by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw after the meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A Rs 2,291-crore programme for strengthening agricultural education and management has been approved, the minister said, adding a Rs 1,702-crore scheme has also been cleared for sustainable livestock health and their production.

Another major scheme worth Rs 860 crore was cleared by the Cabinet for sustainable development for horticulture.

Other decisions taken by the Cabinet pertains to strengthening Krish Vigyan Kendra (Rs 1,202 crore), and Natural Resource Management (Rs 1,115 crore). The total allocation for all the sevens adds up to over Rs 13,960 crore. —*PTI*

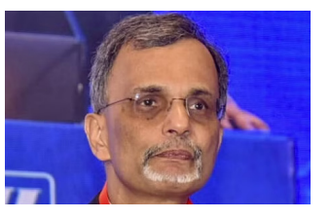
India needs to avoid financialisation: CEA

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

India has one of the brightest global economic growth prospects, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran said on Monday, cautioning that the country needs to avoid 'financialisation' as it marches towards the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

India's stock market capitalisation is around 140 per cent of the GDP, he said, adding, the record profitability of the Indian financial sector and high levels of market capitalisation, or the ratio of market capitalisation to GDP, give rise to another phenomenon which deserves closer examination.

Financialisation is the dominance of financial market expectations trends, and importantly, interest in public policy and macroeconomic outcomes, he said at CII Financing 3.0 Summit here while making a disclaimer that these are his personal views and not as CEA.



Anantha Nageswaran *PHOTO: PTI*

As India looks ahead to 2047 with optimism and hope, he said, this is something it has to avoid, because the consequences of such financialization is there for all to see in the developed world.

Developed countries are encountering these challenges after they have become materially prosperous, he said, adding per capita, India is just stepping into the lower middle income category.

Observing that retaining policy autonomy and space to insulate the economy from the vagaries of global capital flows is critical, Nageswaran said India relies on global capital flows despite modest current account deficit. Of course, he said, "it also means becoming a global agenda setter, rather than an agenda taker. That will be a good thing. While some actions can be initiated now, such as, for example, an Indian entity making the effort to become a global credit rating agency, the outcome and the impact will take much longer to materialise." —*PTI*

Adani acquires 7 GW Khavda project

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Adani Energy Solutions on Monday said it has acquired a 298-km special purpose vehicle (SPV) of the Khavda Phase IV Part-A transmission project entailing an investment of Rs 4,091 crore.

Khavda IVA Power Transmission Ltd, an SPV, was set up by REC Power Development and Consultancy Ltd to evacuate 7 GW of renewable energy from Khavda RE park, the company said in a statement.

Adani Energy Solutions will commission the project in Gujarat in the next 24 months on BOOT (build, own, operate and transfer) basis, it said.

The project also includes setting up 300 MVAr STATCOM and 3x1500 MVA, 765/400 kV Inter-connecting Transformer (ICTs) with 1x330 MVAr, 765 kV and 1x125 MVAr, 420 kV bus reactors, it said.

AESL won the project through the tariff-based competitive bidding process and will commission the project in the next 24 months on BOOT (build, own operate, and transfer) basis and maintain it for the next 35 years, according to the statement.

"As the world's largest renewable energy park, Khavda demands power evacuation infrastructure that is not only world-class but also resilient and future-ready," AESL Chief Executive Officer Kandarp Patel said. —*PTI*

Sebi places JSW Cement's ₹4,000cr IPO on hold

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Capital markets regulator Sebi has put on hold the proposed Rs 4,000-crore initial public offering (IPO) of JSW Cement.

Without specifying reasons, Sebi stated that the "issuance of observations (has been) kept in abeyance," according to an update on its website on Monday. JSW Cement, part of the diversified JSW Group, filed the preliminary IPO papers with Sebi on August 16.

The proposed issue involves a new issue of equity shares worth Rs 2,000 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of Rs 2,000 crore by investor shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed with the regulator. Under the OFS, AP Asia Opportunistic Holdings Pte. Ltd and Synergy Metals Investments Holding Ltd will offload shares worth Rs 937.5 crore each and State Bank of India (SBI) will divest shares valued at Rs 125 crore.

Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 800 crore will be used for partially financing the establishment of a new integrated cement unit in Nagaur, Rajasthan, while Rs 720 crore will be allocated for payment of debt and the remaining funds will be allocated for general corporate purposes.

JSW Cement, which has a manufacturing capacity of 19 MT annually, aims to achieve the capacity of 60 MTPA. It currently has manufacturing units at Vijayanagar in Karnataka, Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh, Salboni in West Bengal, Jajpur in Odisha and Dolvi in Maharashtra.

Besides, JSW Cement through its subsidiary Shiva Cement operates a clinker unit in Odisha. JSW Group has business interests in sectors such as steel, energy, maritime infrastructure, defence, B2B e-commerce, realty, paints, sports and venture capital. —*PTI*

PHOTO: JSW

Gadkari wants FMs to cut GST on flex-fuel vehicles to 12%

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday said state finance ministers should consider reducing Goods and Services Tax (GST) on flex-fuel vehicles to 12 per cent in the GST Council meeting.

Addressing IFGE's India Bio-Energy & Tech Expo, Gadkari also said there is a need to reduce imports of fossil fuels and encourage the use of biofuel.

"We need support from finance ministers of different states. The (Union) finance minister assured me that we will try to convince all the finance ministers.

"Yesterday, I asked Maharashtra's FM to attend the GST Council meeting and propose the reduction of GST on flex-fuel engine cars and scooters," he said.

Flex-fuel-compatible cars can run on more than one type of fuel and also on a mixture. Typically, a blend of petrol and ethanol or methanol is used. The road transport and highways minister informed that he had requested Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to consider reducing taxes on flex-fuel vehicles.

In a separate meeting with the Maharashtra Finance Minister Ajit Pawar, Gadkari suggested him attend a GST meeting with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the issue.

At present, 28 per cent GST is levied on vehicles powered by internal combustion engines, including hybrids, and 5 per cent on electric vehicles.

28 per cent GST is levied on vehicles powered by internal combustion enginesi *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

Gadkari also pointed out that every year, India imports fossil fuels of up to Rs 22 lakh crore, and it is not only a problem related to air pollution but also an economic problem.

"So, now by starting this, a day will come when we will reduce our imports and will encourage bio-fuel," he said.

And because of reducing imports of fossil fuels and encouraging biofuel, the minister said, he is confident that the most important beneficiary will be the agriculture sector. "Today, in the biofuel sector, there is a huge potential," he said. According to Gadkari, in the India scenario, the cost of biofuel is less and there is no pollution, so that is going to be advantageous to the common man also. "This...industry, which is up till now, creates 4.5 crore jobs. This is the industry, which is giving maximum GST to the state and central government," he pointed out.

The minister said as far as the road sector is concerned, India is increasing the length of the National Highways. —*PTI*

AFTER HINDENBURG ROW

'Single filing with exchange to be reality soon'

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

Capital markets regulator Sebi Chief Madhabi Puri Buch on Monday said a single disclosure by listed companies on one stock exchange will soon be automatically uploaded on the other bourse.

This comes after Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) recently proposed sweeping changes to disclosure as well as listing requirements by listed companies based on recommendations from a committee led by SK Mohanty, former whole-time member of Sebi.

Speaking at a CII event, Sebi chairperson said, "a single filing with the exchange will be a reality very soon".

As part of the proposed changes, a filing made on one exchange will automatically collate on the other exchange, she said. A filing made on one exchange will automatically collate on the other exchange.

Sebi Chief Madhabi Puri Buch *PHOTO: PTI*

Additionally, Buch said soon investors will be able to start SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) with as low as Rs 250 per month.

"We are on the way of Rs 250 SIP becoming a reality," she said. Buch avoided commenting on Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), but said there are regulations simplifying such entities. "If I utter a word on REITs, I will be accused of conflict of interest," she added.

The remarks came as US short-seller Hindenburg Research raised questions about a potential conflict of interest involving Buch and private equity major Blackstone.

Her husband Dhaval Buch is a senior advisor with Blackstone, a major player in the REIT space. However, the couple refuted the allegations.

Also, Hindenburg alleged that Sebi's recent amendments to REIT regulations 2014 favoured a specific financial conglomerate, which Sebi denied.

The Sebi chief highlighted plans to make IPO documents available in multiple languages to remove language barriers and increase investor awareness. Also, she emphasised on the importance of the inclusion. —*PTI*

NHAI to track around 100 toll plazas with GIS

NEW DELHI, 2 SEPT

- The live monitoring and tracking system will provide congestion alerts and lane distribution recommendations when the queue of vehicles at a toll plaza is more than the prescribed limit

State-owned NHAI will track around 100 toll plazas with GIS-based software for seamless movement of traffic at national highways, an official statement said on Monday.

According to the statement, these toll plazas have been identified based on congestion feedback received through 1,033 national highway helpline. The live monitoring and tracking system will provide congestion alerts and lane distribution recommendations when the queue of vehicles at a toll plaza is more than the prescribed limit, it added.

The monitoring service will be extended to more toll plazas in a phased manner. Apart from providing the name and location of the toll plaza, the statement said the software will share details related to the live status of queue length in meters, total waiting time and vehicle speed at toll plaza.

It will also provide congestion alert and lane distribution recommendation, if the queue of vehicles at a toll plaza is more than the prescribed limit, the statement added. In addition, it said the software will provide updates related to current weather conditions and information about local festivals, enabling NHAI officials to take pre-emptive measures to manage the traffic load and decongest the toll plazas. —*PTI*

Murugesan, Manisha shine with Silver & Bronze

Sheetal Devi-Rakesh Kumar pair advances to semifinals in the mixed team open archery

PARIS, 2 SEPT

The 19-year-old Manisha Ramadass, who was born with Erb's Palsy affecting her right arm, secured the bronze by defeating Denmark's Cathrine Rosengren 21-12, 21-8.

"I am very happy. I am on cloud nine," said Manisha. "I was really disappointed yesterday. I couldn't get over it. Since I woke up today, I was still thinking about the match. I was angry for making some errors yesterday, so I poured all that anger on the court today. But this is not enough for me; I will work hard for the next four years to change the colour of the medal."

Thulasimathi Murugesan settled for a silver medal after losing to China's Yang Qiu Xia in the Women's Singles SU5 category.

Manisha Ramadass posses for a photograph affter the match ***PHOTO:PTI***

Nitesh's Journey: From Bedridden to Podium

Competing in the SL3 category, reserved for players with severe lower limb disabilities, Nitesh's journey to gold has been extraordinary. At 15, he lost his left leg in a train accident in Visakhapatnam in 2009. However, this devastating event couldn't crush his spirit.

His victory on Monday not only marked a personal triumph but also ensured that India retained the SL3 gold, which Pramod Bhagat won three years ago when badminton made its Paralympic debut in Tokyo.

The journey from being bedridden after his accident to standing atop the Paralympic podium is a story marked by an indomitable spirit that drew inspiration from some of the most unlikely places.

Thulasimathi's journey of resilience

Thulasimathi was born with a congenital deformity that left her without a thumb on her left hand. She faced numbness, tingling, and weakness in the hand and arm along with thinning of muscle mass. *—PTI*

Preethi 1st Indian to win 2 para medals in athletics

PARIS, 2 SEPT

India's Preethi Pal created history as she became the first Indian woman track and field athlete to win two medals at the Paralympics while clinching the bronze in the 200m T35 category with a personal best time of 30.01 seconds here on Sunday.

The 23-year-old Preethi also became only the second Indian woman to win two medals -- both bronze -- in a single Paralympics after shooter Avani Lekhara who won a gold and a bronze in Tokyo three years ago. World record holder and Tokyo Paralympics champion Zhou Xia of China won the gold with a time of 28.15 while compatriot Guo Qianqian (29.09 seconds) took the silver. T35 classification is meant for athletes who have coordination impairments such as hypertonia, ataxia and athetosis. On Friday, Preethi, a farmer's daughter from Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, had clinched India's first athletics medal in a Paralympics track event, winning a bronze in the women's T35 100m competition with a personal best time of 14.21 seconds. *—PTI*

I want to break jinx by clinching Gold: Kathuniya

PARIS, 2 SEPT

A second consecutive silver medal at the Paralympics is not a feat Indian discus thrower Yogesh Kathuniya is too happy about as he feels he is stuck with second-place finish in a series of major events.

The 27-year-old from Haryana produced a season best effort of 42.22m to finish second on the F-56 discus podium at the Paris Olympics on Monday.

But Kathuniya wasn't satisfied with his performance and he vowed to better the colour of his medal in the next major tournament.

"Event was okay, I got a silver. I will work harder to change the colour of the medal," a rather disappointed Kathuniya said after his event. "For some time, I'm winning silver only be it Tokyo (Paralympics) or today, World Championships or Asian Games..everywhere I'm winning silver. Gaadi atak gayi hai (I'm stuck on silver). I think I need to work harder. Now I want gold."

Kathuniya, who developed the Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare autoimmune condition which causes numbness, tingling and muscle weakness that can progress to paralysis, was wheelchair bound before his mother learnt physiotherapy to help him regain muscle strength to walk again.

The F56 category is meant for athletes who compete in field events from a seated position. Different athletes, including those with amputations and spinal cord injuries, compete in this class. *—PTI*

Yogesh Kathuniya, discus thrower, poses for photos after winning the silver medal in F56 category at Paris Paralympic ***PHOTO: PTI***

Indian shooters Nihal, Amir fail to clear QF round

CHATEAUROUX, 2 SEPT

Indian shooters Nihal Singh and Amir Ahmad Bhat could not make the final of the mixed 25m pistol (SH1) competition at the Paralympics here on Monday, finishing 10th and 11th respectively in the qualifications. The two Indians showed consistency when they turned up for the qualification round in the first session. Nihal was placed fourth with a score of 287 at the end of the precision stage, while Amir was holding the eighth and final qualifying spot with 286. In the rapid stage however, both Nihal and Amir could only manage 282 for aggregate scores of 569 and 568 respectively, which were not good enough for them to clear the qualification. The top eight shooters from the qualification progress to the final. Athletes classified in SH1 are able to hold their gun without difficulty and shoot from a standing or sitting position (in a wheelchair or chair). As a rule, SH1 athletes may use a pistol or a rifle. *—PTI*

Verstappen casts doubt over Red Bull future

PHOTO: X

MONZA, 2 SEPT

What a difference a year makes. Even Max Verstappen is at a loss as to how he went from having such a dominant Formula 1 car last season to one that he now describes as "a monster." The Red Bull driver had a weekend to forget at the Italian Grand Prix as he could only qualify in seventh place and went on to finish sixth in Sunday's race. "Last year we had a great car, which was the most dominant car ever. And we basically turned it into a monster," a dejected Verstappen said. "So we have to turn it around." Last year at Monza, Verstappen secured a record 10th straight win in a season where the final outcome was never in doubt. Now the three-time defending F1 champion is without a victory in six straight races, his longest winless run since 2020, and is seeing his lead in the drivers' standings being chipped away by Lando Norris race by race. There was some consolation on Sunday as Norris could only finish third, behind his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri and Charles Leclerc — who delighted the passionate red-clad tifosi with a win at Ferrari's home track after an audacious one-stop strategy. Nevertheless, Norris trimmed the gap to Verstappen to 62 points, while McLaren moved to just eight points behind Red Bull in the constructors' championship. *—AP*

Diksha Dagar finishes tied-38 in Irish Open

PHOTO: X

DUBLIN, 2 SEPT

Diksha Dagar scored an even par 73 for a four-round total of 4-under 288 here as the two-time winner on the Ladies European Tour finished tied-38 after making the cut in tied-55th place, which was also the cut line, here at the Women's Irish Open. Playing at the par-73 O'Meara Course at Carton House, Diksha had four birdies against four bogeys, two of which came on par-5s at the 15th and the 17 holes, where she had birdies on the first two days. While Diksha had a decent 29 putts for the round, she was found wanting with her approach shots having only 11 greens in regulation of 18. The other three Indians, Tvesa Malik Sandhu, Pranavi Urs and Ridhima Dilawari missed the cut. England's Annabel Dimmock completed her return from injury as she won her first Ladies European Tour (LET) title in five years after defeating Pauline Roussin-Bouchard in a playoff. *—PTI*

Suryakumar Yadav to miss first round of Duleep Trophy

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

India batter Suryakumar Yadav will miss the opening round of the Duleep Trophy starting on 5 September due to an injury to his hand which he sustained last week. The right-handed Suryakumar, who played in the final outing for Mumbai in the Buchi Babu Invitational Tournament in Coimbatore against TNCA XI, had missed the last day's play of the contest due to the injury as he did not come out to bat. Suryakumar, whose unavailability for Duleep Trophy contest was confirmed by BCCI sources, was set to play for India C against India D at Ananthapur in the first-round clash from 5-8 September. He has reported at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. Simultaneously, India A and India B will clash at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru in the other match of the competition. *—PTI*

Tiafoe clinches third US Open qualification berth

NEW YORK, 2 SEPT

A point away from losing the second set with his opponent serving, Frances Tiafoe looked at a positive.

At least, he figured, he would be able to change out of his sweaty shirt and sneakers.

A couple minutes later, he hadn't changed his clothes. He had changed around the match.

Tiafoe rallied to steal the second set and went on to earn his way back to the US Open quarterfinals for the third straight year, beating Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 7-6 (3), 2-6, 6-3 on Sunday night. "I think the second set was a huge, huge win for me," Tiafoe said. "You know, 5-3, 40-love, him serving, how good he serves, that was really, really big. To break there and then to win that set was huge." The No. 20 seed will attempt to match the best Grand Slam result of his career when he faces No. 9 Grigor Dimitrov on Tuesday for a berth in the semifinals. *—AP*

BOPANNA-EBDEN OUSTED

NEW YORK, 2 SEPT

India's challenge in the men's doubles event of the US Open ended with the defeat of Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden in the third round, here.

The second seeded Bopanna-Ebden pair lost 1-6 5-7 to the 16th seed Argentine combo of Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni in 66 minutes on Sunday night.

Bopanna and Ebden had won the Australian Open early this year.

The 44-year-old Bopanna has already announced retirement from Davis Cup and it will be interesting to see if he will return to defend his Australian Open crown in January 2025. Sumit Nagal had exited the men's singles with an opening round defeat while Yuki Bhambri and N Sriram Balaji earlier lost in men's doubles at different stages of the tournament.

Ebden and Czech Republic's Barbora Krejcikova are seeded fourth in the mixed doubles. *—PTI*

Rain halts Bangladesh's bid for clean sweep in 2nd test

RAWALPINDI, 2 SEPT

Rain halted Bangladesh's bid for a clean sweep against Pakistan after young pace bowlers Hasan Mahmud and Nahid Rana rattled the hosts for 172 on Day 4 in the second test on Monday.

Bangladesh had scampered to 42-0 in seven overs before bad light, followed by rain, allowed only one over of play in the final session on Day 4. The tourists will be needing another 143 runs for a rare test series win away from home.

The 24-year-old Mahmud grabbed 5-43 for his maiden five-wicket haul in only his second test match while 21-year-old Rana chipped in with 4-44 as Pakistan was bowled out half an hour before tea for an overall lead of 184.

Under overcast conditions, Bangladesh openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam scored at a rapid pace before rain arrived. Zakir was unbeaten on 31 off 23 balls that included two pulled sixes against fast bowler Khurram Shahzad and Shadman Islam was not out on 9.

A resilient century from Litton Das and equally splendid half century from Mehidy Hasan Miraz allowed Pakistan a slender first innings lead of 12 runs after the tourists had collapsed to 26-6 on Day 3.

Babar Azam's (11) poor run of form in test matches stretched to seven games when he fell to Rana for the second time in the series as the tall fast bowler rattled the top order by claiming three wickets in his first three overs. *—PTI*

Emma Navarro defeats Coco Gauff

NEW YORK, 2 SEPT

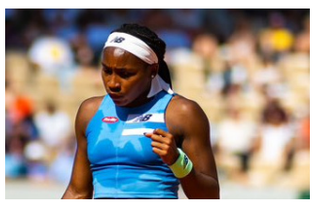
This is pretty much all anyone needs to know about defending champion Coco Gauff's 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 loss to Emma Navarro in the US Open's fourth round: Gauff wound up with more double-faults, 19, than winners, 14.

It was the latest in a series of early-for-her exits in recent weeks, including bowing out in the third round at the Paris Olympics, then going 1-2 at hard-court tuneup events before arriving in New York.

The 20-year-old from Florida did fight her way back into the match with a four-game run in which she claimed 14 of 17 points and grabbed the second set.

She finished with a total of 60 unforced errors — a whopping 29 on her forehand side.

The 23-year-old Navarro, who also eliminated Gauff in the fourth round at Wimbledon in July, was far steadier on Sunday, although she still did have 35 unforced errors.



The quarterfinals will give Navarro another chance to play at Arthur Ashe Stadium in front of a big crowd. She'd never hit a ball in the place until Sunday — and felt rather at ease, anyway *—AP*

HONOURS EVEN

Players of Mohun Bagan and East Bengal (in red) vie for the ball during an exhibition football match, at the KD Singh Babu Stadium, in Lucknow on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

EX-INDIAN CAP

ISL is a key event in my life: Chhetri

MUMBAI, 2 SEPT

Bengaluru FC skipper Sunil Chhetri hailed the Indian Super League as one of the most important tournaments he has participated in, ahead of the commencement of the 2024-25 season of the competition.

Chhetri admitted that back in 2014, he wouldn't have predicted the growth that the ISL has seen over the years, producing umpteen young talents and becoming bigger with the entrance of new clubs.

"It has been outstanding. 10 years back if I was asked where ISL would reach, or the position that it would hold in Indian football, I probably wouldn't have guessed where we are. It has grown outstandingly well from an eight-club two-month-long league to now running for the whole year,

PHOTO: ANI

with the talents that it has produced," Chhetri said.

Chhetri began his senior career with Mohun Bagan in 2002 and even had a brief stint with East Bengal FC from 2008-09. He is well aware of the popularity that the Kolkata clubs possess and is hence optimistic of the positive impact of Mohammedan SC's presence in the ISL.

"Trust me, wherever they travel, they will have fans. I am really thrilled that Mohammedan SC have earned this spot in the ISL," Chhetri said.

The ISL 2024-25 season will begin with Mumbai City FC taking on Mohun Bagan Super Giant at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) on 13 September. Bengaluru FC will come into action the following day, on 14 September, against East Bengal FC at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru.

Chhetri's role models

Chhetri retired from international football this year after an illustrious 19-year-long stint for India.

At 40, he has now completed over two decades of professional football, but fondly recollects both domestic and international veterans who inspired him to become a better footballer. *—PTI*

India eye fresh start in new coach Manolo's 1st match

HYDERABAD, 2 SEPT

Seeking to put the heartbreak in the World Cup Qualifiers behind, the Indian men's football team will look to start from scratch under new head coach Manolo Márquez when it faces Mauritius in the Intercontinental Cup opener here on Tuesday.

The Indian senior men's team is coming to the Telangana capital for the first time in 16 years as the city plays host to Mauritius and Syria from 3 to 9 September.

The coach has termed the tournament a dress rehearsal for bigger tasks ahead -- AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers. Marquez felt that he will be able to better judge the quality of his squad when the season is up and running.

"The first FIFA window now is a little tricky because we are still in pre-season. Some clubs played with their reserve team in the Durand Cup. We don't exactly know the physical situation of all the players.

That won't happen in the next FIFA windows because the ISL will be ongoing. But again, I think this is not an excuse. We are ready for tomorrow."

The matches will be played at the GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium. The team's long-term target is qualification for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, which is set to begin in March next year.

Marquez has stressed on the importance of obtaining good results in the upcoming three FIFA international match windows so as to keep India's place in Pot 1 ahead of December's draw. *—PTI*